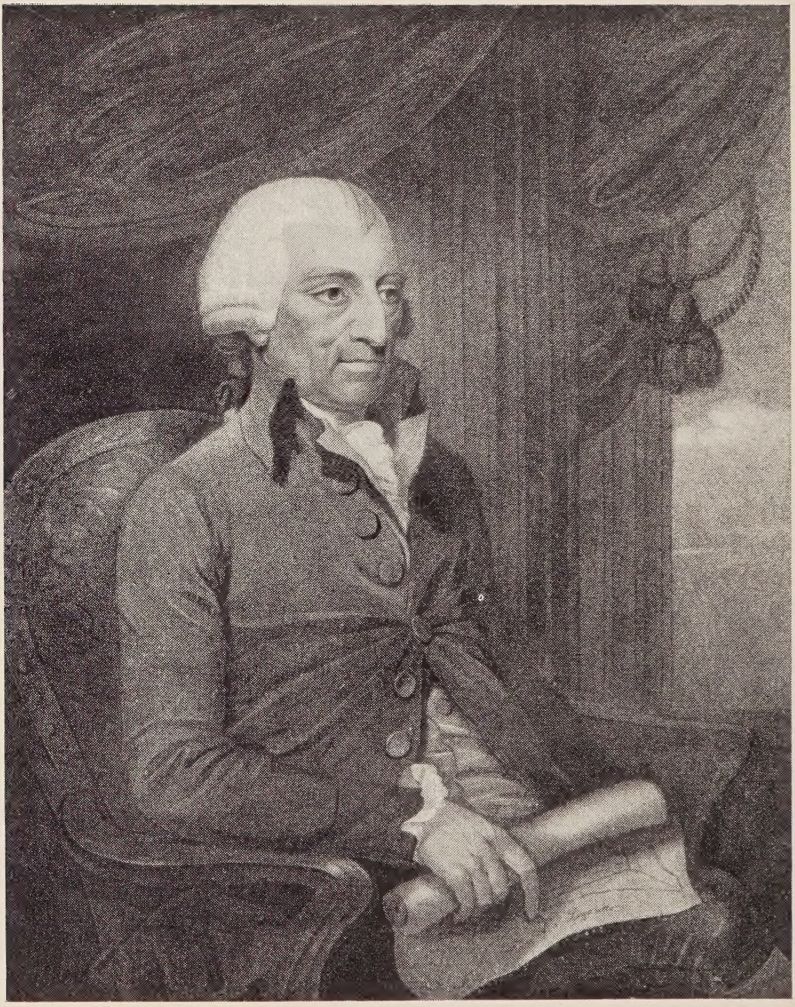
THE LIFE OF JOHN HOWARD

BZP (Howard)

W. King H. Macdonald.

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JOHN HOWARD



JOHN HOWARD

From an engraving after the portrait by Mather Brown

JOHN HOWARD

BY

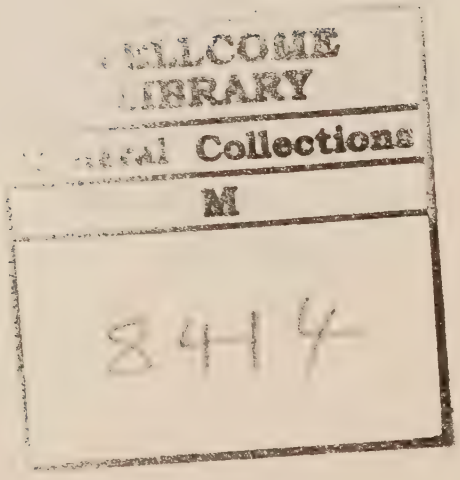
EDGAR C. S. GIBSON

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS

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BZP (Howard)





PREFACE

THERE are several Lives of Howard in existence, but, with the exception of Dr. Stoughton's *Howard the Philanthropist*, the longer and better ones have all been for some years out of print; and Dr. Stoughton's book, full and careful as it is, is somewhat discursive, and gives more space to ecclesiastical matters, which have but little to do with Howard, than seems to be necessary. Hence there appears to be room for another biography which shall tell the main facts of the philanthropist's life, and recall his memory to the present generation. In preparing it, the writer has made full use of Howard's own writings, as well as of the early *Lives* by Aikin and Brown. Of these Aikin's *View of the Character and Public Services of the late John Howard* (1792) is our earliest authority, and has the advantage of being written by one of Howard's closest personal friends. It is, however, very slight and sketchy, and leaves much untold. A far fuller,

and more thorough work is Brown's *Memoirs of the Public and Private Life of John Howard the Philanthropist,* the first edition of which was published in 1818. Brown had access to Howard's private diary, as well as to a number of his letters, and made careful inquiries of his relatives, friends, and servants; but unfortunately he was unable to obtain any letters from members of the Whitbread family. This necessitated a certain incompleteness in his work, and left a gap which much needed to be filled up. In spite of this, his volume will always remain the great storehouse of material for all subsequent workers, and will ever be the main authority for Howard's life. It needs, however, to be supplemented by the Rev. J. Field's *Correspondence of John Howard* (1855), in which the philanthropist's letters to Mr. and Lady Mary Whitbread were for the first time made public. Field had a few years earlier published a painstaking *Life of Howard,* shortly after the appearance of which he was informed of the existence of this correspondence, and happily obtained permission to publish it, thereby materially adding to our knowledge of Howard. This volume, then, and Brown's *Memoir,* together with Howard's own writings, are the main sources from which the present sketch has been compiled, although full use has also been made of the notices of Howard which appeared shortly

after his death in the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the *Universal Magazine* for 1790, as well as of Dr. Stoughton's work already referred to. Other *Lives*, such as that by Hepworth Dixon, have been consulted, but none of them add materially to our knowledge.

In regard to the illustrations it may be well to note that the history of the frontispiece is given on p. 190. The "Portrait of the second Mrs. Howard" (No. 2) is taken from Brown's *Memoir*, for which the engraving was made from an original miniature, which Howard himself gave to his faithful servant, Mrs. Prole. The "Scene in Bridewell" (No. 3) is, of course, the familiar one from Hogarth's "Harlot's Progress." The representations of the "Courts of the King's Bench" and the "Fleet" (Nos. 4 and 5) are reproduced from Ackerman's *Microcosm of London*. The "Poor Debtor's Cell" (No. 6) is from an engraving in the British Museum. The next three illustrations (Nos. 7, 8, and 9) are all taken from Howard's *State of Prisons*. No. 10, "Howard relieving Prisoners," is from an old print published in 1791 shortly after Howard's death, and the illustration of "Howard's Tomb" is taken from the sketch by R. Heber in Clarke's *Travels*, vol. i. p. 573.

E. C. S. G.

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JOHN HOWARD

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

Howard's Parentage—Date and Place of Birth—School Days —Apprenticeship — Howard his own Master—"Look among the Cabbages" — Foreign Tour — Marriage— Death of Mrs. Howard.

OF the childhood and early life of John Howard but few particulars have come down to us. His father was a wealthy upholsterer in the city of London, residing at one time at Enfield, and later on at Clapton; and the fact that he was fined for Sheriff in the year 1742 testifies to his prosperous circumstances. His mother's name is said to have been Cholmley. According to his monument in St. Paul's Cathedral, the inscription for which was written by his kinsman Mr. Whitbread, he was born at Hackney on the 2nd

of September 1726, and though the statements as to place and date have both been questioned, yet, if Hackney be understood as including Clapton, it is probable that the inscription is correct. Howard's own authority may be claimed for the statement that he was born at Lower Clapton, "in an ancient house which had been many years in possession of his father and grandfather";[1] and if he was accurate in informing a friend in November 1787 that he was then sixty-one years of age, the year of his birth must have been 1726.[2]

[1] Dr. Aikin, Howard's personal friend and earliest biographer, "believes" that he was born at Enfield, "about the year 1727 (*View of the Character and Public Services of John Howard*, p. 9). Enfield is also given as the place of his birth in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1790 (vol. lx. part 1. p. 369); and Field, in *The Correspondence of John Howard*, says: "I have been favoured with a copy of the family register, part of which is in Howard's own handwriting, and this records that he was born at Enfield," p. 1. In spite of this, however, it is probable that Clapton was really the place. It is given in the notice in the *Universal Magazine* for 1790 (vol. lxxxvi. p. 170), characterised by Howard's friend, the Rev. S. Palmer, as "much the best" notice of him that had appeared (*ib.* p. 236); and in this particular matter Palmer himself was able to corroborate the assertion of the biographical notice, by the assurance that he had "more than once heard" Howard himself speak of the house at Clapton as that in which he was born (*ib.* p. 319). This, taken with the evidence of the monument, seems to be conclusive.

[2] See the *Gentleman's Magazine* (vol. lx. part 1. p. 287). The date 1726 is also confirmed by a paper of directions

Howard's mother, who had previously borne to his father a daughter, died while he was still in infancy, and being a delicate child he was sent, for the sake of his health, to Cardington, near Bedford, where his father owned some property; and thus in very early days began his connection with the place which was to be famous as his home in later years. As the boy grew, his father, being a strict Independent, sent him for his education to a dissenting school at Hertford, kept by a Mr. Worsley. Beyond the fact that he remained here for seven years we know little or nothing of his school days. But in after years he certainly felt that the choice of the school had not been a happy one, for he is reported to have said, with more indignation than he usually expressed, that he left it "not fully taught any one thing." [1] On

which Howard drew up with regard to his burial, in case he should die during his Eastern tour to investigate the condition of lazarettos in 1786. In this he gives a proposed inscription for his monument: "John Howard, died 1786, aged 59. Christ is my hope." The paper was sent to Mr. Whitbread on Oct. 26, from Venice, but it contains internal evidence of having been written *early* in the year, some months before Howard's birthday, and was probably composed in the spring at Malta. He contemplates the possibility of dying "either here, or at Zante, Smyrna, or Constantinople"; and as he left Malta for Zante and Smyrna towards the end of April it must have been written before this, when his age would be 59, if he was born on Sept. 2, 1726.

[1] Aikin's *View, etc.*, p. 12.

his removal from Hertford he was placed for a time under the care of a Mr. John Eames, a man of considerable reputation, and tutor in philosophy and languages at a dissenting Academy in London. But Howard cannot be said to have been fortunate in his education; and it is evident that in after years he felt his deficiencies somewhat acutely. Dr. Aikin's statement, that he "was never able to speak or write his native language with grammatical correctness," is fully borne out by his own letters, the spelling of which is distinctly original; and in preparing his books for publication we know that he was glad to avail himself of the help of others whose literary attainments were greater than his own. "His acquaintance," Aikin adds, "with other languages (the French perhaps excepted) was slight and superficial."[1] An exception must certainly be made as regards French, for Howard's own accounts of his travels not only supply ample proof of the facility with which he could converse in the language, but also show that he had no difficulty in actually passing himself off as a Frenchman, as occasion required. It is probable, however, that his knowledge of this and other languages was acquired later, and picked up by him in the course of his travels. Indeed, it would have been something quite unusual had he left school with anything more

[1] Aikin's *View, etc.*, p. 13.

than a "slight and superficial" acquaintance with any modern language besides his own mother tongue.

School days ended, Howard was apprenticed to a wholesale grocer in Watling Street; but on his father's death, a few years later, he was left practically his own master, and in possession of ample means, of which his guardians left him entire control on his coming of age, although, according to his father's will, he was not to come into his property until the age of twenty-four. Business was not to Howard's liking, and accordingly before his time was up he bought himself out, intending apparently to live a life of ease and comfort, with Clapton as his head-quarters. To this period belongs the earliest anecdote that has come down to us of him, and, slight as the incident is, it may be mentioned here as illustrative of the kind-heartedness and whimsical humour which were characteristic of the man throughout his life. Many years later an old gardener, who had been for long in the service of the Howards at Clapton, used to relate, that during some alterations which were being made in the house, his young master used to come every other day to superintend the work, and that he timed his visits so as to be there when the baker's cart was passing, when he would purchase a loaf, and, tossing it over the wall into the garden, exclaim to the gardener, "Harry,

look among the cabbages, and you will find something for your family."

To the same period must be assigned the first of the numerous foreign tours which Howard was to make. The journey in this case, unlike so many of his later ones, was undertaken with no further object beyond his own interest and enjoyment, and possibly the benefit of his health. Of the details of the tour we know nothing, save the fact that he visited France and Italy; but it was perhaps at this time that some of the pictures and works of art were purchased which afterwards adorned the house at Cardington.

We now come to the curious story of Howard's first marriage. Like his illustrious contemporary, Dr. Johnson, he married a woman old enough to be his mother; and, like Richard Hooker, his marriage was to some extent due to the discomfort of life in lodgings. But whereas in Hooker's case the marriage was suggested by the landlady, who, after representing that he ought to have some one to look after him, presented him with her daughter Joan as a suitable wife, in Howard's case the suggestion was all his own, and it was the landlady herself, and not her daughter, to whose charms he succumbed. The facts are these. On his return from his travels, Howard, whose health was anything but good, was advised to move into the country, and settled down in lodg-

ings at Stoke Newington. He suffered from want of proper attention in the rooms which he first selected, and presently moved into the house of a Mrs. Sarah Loidore, or Lardeau—the name is given in both forms. Here he was seized with a severe illness; and so grateful was he for the attention shown to him by his landlady, that, on his recovery, the first thing he did was to offer her his hand in marriage. Owing to the disparity of their ages, for Mrs. Lardeau was over fifty and Howard himself but twenty-four, the lady hesitated to accept. But her suitor was persistent, and in the end obtained her consent. The marriage, which took place in 1752, turned out better than might have been expected. Mrs. Howard is represented as a "sensible worthy woman," and her husband was sincerely attached to her. He was, as we have seen, in easy circumstances himself, and showed his disinterestedness by settling his wife's small fortune upon her sister. The union, however, was not destined to be of long duration, for Mrs. Howard, who was in weak health at the time of the marriage, died towards the close of 1755, and Howard was left a widower before he was thirty.

CHAPTER II

LIFE, TO THE DEATH OF HOWARD'S SECOND WIFE

Change of Residence—Foreign Tour—Capture by French Privateer—Experiences in a French Prison—Howard elected F.R.S.—Settles at Cardington—Second Marriage—Anecdotes of Mrs. Howard—Removal to Watcombe—Return to Cardington—Birth of a Son and Death of Mrs. Howard.

THE death of Mrs. Howard led to the break-up of the house at Stoke Newington. Howard in characteristic fashion distributed his furniture among his dependents and poorer neighbours, and in after years his old gardener delighted to tell how, on this occasion, he received as his "dividend" a bedstead and bedding, a table, six chairs, and a scythe, in addition to a guinea for a single day's work, probably in removing furniture. For a time Howard took lodgings in St. Paul's Churchyard, but being now free to indulge his taste for roving and his desire to see foreign countries, it was not long before he started once more upon his travels. Shortly before this, there

had taken place the great earthquake of 1755, whereby Lisbon was laid in ruins; and Howard, moved probably by curiosity rather than any philanthropic design of relieving distress, determined to visit the scene of the calamity and to make a tour in Portugal. He failed, however, to reach the country, for the *Hanover*, the packet in which he sailed, was captured by a French privateer, and taken into Brest. The account of Howard's experiences on this occasion must be given in his own words, as he refers to the incident in a note in his book on Prisons, in order to illustrate the sufferings of prisoners of war.

"Before we reached Brest I suffered the extremity of thirst, not having for above forty hours one drop of water, nor scarcely a morsel of food. In the castle at Brest I lay six nights upon straw, and observed how cruelly my countrymen were used there and at Morlaix, whither I was carried next; during two months I was at Carhaix upon parole, I corresponded with the English prisoners at Brest, Morlaix, and Dinnan: at the last of these towns were several of our ship's crew, and my servant. I had sufficient evidence of their being treated with such barbarity that many hundreds had perished, and that thirty-six were buried in a hole at Dinnan in one day. When I came to England, still on parole, I made known to the Commissioners of Sick and Wounded Seamen

the sundry particulars which gained their attention and thanks. Remonstrance was made to the French Court; our sailors had redress; and those that were in the three prisons, mentioned above, were brought home in the first cartel-ships." [1]

In addition to the account of his sufferings, contained in this note, a few details are added by Brown. At Brest the prisoners were kept for a considerable time without nourishment; at last a joint of mutton was thrown into the filthy dungeon, which the prisoners were obliged to tear to pieces and gnaw like dogs. At Carhaix, where he spent two months on parole, the person at whose house he lodged supplied him, though an utter stranger, with both clothes and money—for he had been stripped of his belongings at Brest. And when at length he was allowed to return to England it was only upon his promise that he would once more return to captivity, should the English Government refuse to exchange him for a French naval officer.[2]

It is curious that at this early period, many years before his philanthropic labours began, Howard should thus have experienced in his own person something of the sufferings which he was to spend his later years in alleviating. The incident, however, stands by itself, and can hardly be said to

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 11.

[2] Brown's *Life*, p. 19, cf. *Universal Magazine* for 1790.

have affected his career. It is true that, in the note already referred to, he says that the sufferings which he endured on this occasion "perhaps increased" his "sympathy with the unhappy people" whose condition he was then investigating. But the fact that seventeen years were allowed to elapse before he entered on his philanthropic labours is sufficient proof that these sufferings of his were in no sense the moving cause of his subsequent efforts for the relief of distress.

It must have been shortly before, or immediately after, the adventure just related that Howard was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, on May 20, 1756. His scientific attainments do not appear to have been anything exceptional. But he was interested in meteorology and kindred subjects, and his exact mind delighted in close observation and the collection of statistics. His contributions, however, to the *Transactions* of the Society were neither numerous nor important. The earliest appears in the volume for 1764, and consists of a short letter "On the Degree of Cold observed at Cardington in the Winter of 1763." Two others are found in later volumes, "On the Heat of the Waters at Bath," and "On the Heat of the Ground on Mount Vesuvius."

On his return to England from his captivity Howard's first care, as his own words show, was to make representations concerning the state of the

prisoners of war, to the Commissioners for the Sick and Wounded Seamen. This done, an exchange was effected with a French officer, and as soon as he was at liberty he settled down on his estate at Cardington, and proceeded to enlarge and improve the house, intending to make it his home for life. Two years later, in 1758, he married again. The lady of his choice was Miss Henrietta Leeds, daughter of Edward Leeds, Esq. of Croxton, in Cambridgeshire. The marriage was well calculated to make Howard a happy man. Indeed, in after years, he is said to have frequently referred to the few years of his union with his wife as the only years of true enjoyment that he had ever spent. The tastes of husband and wife were similar, and Mrs. Howard delighted to second her husband's efforts to improve the condition of the tenants upon his estate. The few stories that are preserved of her indicate great gentleness and simplicity of character. Howard himself, we are told, used in later years to describe how before their marriage he had suggested to her that "to prevent all altercations about those little matters which he had observed to be the chief grounds of uneasiness in families," the decision on any question that might arise should rest with him. To this the lady seems readily to have assented, and, to judge from the disposition of the two parties, there is little doubt



MRS. HOWARD

From the portrait in Brown's Memoir

that the arrangement was a judicious one, and that it proved satisfactory in its working.

After their marriage Howard is related to have taken his wife to some place of public resort in London, in order to see what effect it would have upon her mind; and as she appeared to be lost in thought, and to show no interest whatever in the scene before them, he suddenly turned to her, and exclaimed, "Now, Harriet, I must insist on your telling me what you have been thinking about." "Well," was her answer, "if I must tell you, I have been thinking of Mr. ——'s sermon last Sunday!"

One other anecdote has been preserved, telling how when Howard, on making up his accounts, found that he had an unexpected balance in his favour, and suggested to his wife a journey to London for their own pleasure, or any other indulgence she might choose, he received for answer the remark, "What a pretty cottage it would build." Accordingly, the journey was abandoned, and the cottage was forthwith erected.

It is evident from these stories that the husband and wife were well suited to each other; and, what is more important than anything else, they were united in religious feeling, although the one was a dissenter, and the other a member of the Church of England. It has already been mentioned that the elder Howard was a Congrega-

tionalist. His son had early joined himself to the same body, of which he remained an attached member to the end of his life. His relations with the ministers of the various chapels which he attended, whether in London or at Bedford, were uniformly cordial, and some of the firmest friendships of his life were made with them. Mrs. Howard was a churchwoman, and, during her lifetime, Howard seems to have usually accompanied her, at least once on Sundays, to the parish church (where later on he erected a monument to her memory), though he never shrank from acknowledging himself a dissenter. He was a man of Evangelical piety, firmly convinced of the truth of the somewhat narrow Calvinistic creed in which he had been brought up, but of a large-hearted charity, tolerant of others who differed from him, and ever ready to unite with any who were inspired with the same spirit of benevolence and philanthropy which grew upon him as he gave it exercise.

Soon after the marriage, in consequence of the weak state of Mrs. Howard's health, a change of residence from Cardington was advised, and Howard removed to Watcombe near Lymington, in the New Forest, where he purchased an estate. The result of the experiment was not satisfactory. The place was too damp; and after three or four years the estate was sold, and the Howards

returned to Cardington. This was to be their home for life, and they now set to work in earnest in improving the property. Their own house and gardens were considerably altered, and it was at this time that the root-house, which figures in a well-known story of Howard and his son was built. This was a favourite resort of Howard's, for quiet thought and meditation. He would spend hours here, and had it fitted up with a small bookcase containing works of a devotional character, such as Hervey's *Meditations* (a favourite work among the Evangelicals of the last century), and the writings of Flavel and Baxter. Of the improvements made on the estate, and of Howard's efforts and plans for the good of his tenants, a more detailed account is reserved for the next chapter. He was now evidently looking forward to spending a quiet and retired life, with plenty to occupy him in the management of his property, and the pursuit of those scientific studies and observations in which he delighted. As he says himself, in the earliest letter of his which has been preserved, he had his books and instruments comfortably about him, and was hoping for more time to enjoy them. Ten or a dozen hands were employed on the estate in digging and planting under his superintendence;[1] and the only thing that was wanting to complete his happiness, the birth of a son and heir, was

[1] See Field's *Correspondence of John Howard*, p. 14.

granted to him in the spring of 1765. But his happiness was soon dashed to the ground, for four days later Mrs. Howard, who till then had seemed to be going on well, suddenly passed away in her husband's arms. In the family register Howard himself has recorded his sad loss as follows:

"John, my son, was born about four o'clock, March 27, 1765. Sabbath evening, March 31, 1765, died the dear mother. Unaffected piety, meekness, and goodness ran through her whole life. O God, sanctify the dear memorial! Thy grace imparting the same temper and mind; that we both, by Thine unbounded goodness, in and through Jesus Christ, may be followers of her faith and patience, and be for ever with the Lord.—O glorious day!" [1]

[1] Field's *Correspondence of John Howard*, p. 18.

CHAPTER III

LIFE, FROM THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE TO HOWARD'S APPOINTMENT AS HIGH SHERIFF OF BEDFORD

Life at Cardington—A wholesome Despotism—Kindly Relations with his Tenants—Foreign Travel—Letters from Abroad—Ascent of Vesuvius—Return Home—Trouble among the Congregationalists—Howard's Sundays—His Treatment of his Son.

AFTER the death of his wife, Howard, whose health was not robust, continued to reside quietly at Cardington, finding his recreation in his meteorological observations, and in registering the temperature; and his serious occupation in the improvement of his estate, and earnest endeavours to better the condition of his tenants. He was a sanitary reformer and an educationalist, in days when neither sanitary reform nor education were of much account. The village of Cardington lies low, and many of the cottages on his estate were damp and unhealthy. Accordingly, new and improved ones were erected, each with a small garden attached; and

these were still let at the original low rent. Schools of a somewhat primitive character were started, and maintained by his liberality till the end of his life. The greatest pains were taken to find employment for the tenants; and stringent rules were laid down for their conduct. They must avoid the public-house, and eschew all such amusements as their landlord disapproved of. They must attend public worship either at Church or at Chapel; and in order to facilitate matters, one of his own cottages was fitted up as a meeting-house, where from time to time dissenting ministers would conduct service. Whig though he was in politics, Howard was a believer in a wholesome despotism; and in order to secure full power to remove any who failed to conform to his regulations, he only admitted persons to his cottages as tenants at will.

In all his efforts for the benefit of the poor, Howard had the warm support of his neighbour, Mr. Samuel Whitbread, lord of the manor at Cardington, and owner of a considerable property there. Mr. Whitbread was a connection of the Leeds family, and, through his wife, Howard claimed to be his cousin. A close friendship sprang up, not only between the two men, but also between Howard and Lady Mary Whitbread, a daughter of Lord Cornwallis, who was

married to his friend in 1769. Happily a considerable number of his letters to them both have been preserved, which materially add to our knowledge of his life and character. His correspondence with Mr. Whitbread is largely concerned with business details, which show the happy relations existing between the two neighbours, and their earnest solicitude for the welfare of their tenants, so that we can easily believe the statement of a contemporary, that, as the result of their efforts, "Cardington, which seemed at one time to contain the abodes of poverty and wretchedness, soon became one of the neatest villages in the kingdom"; and the following description of Howard's kindly relations with his tenants is worth citing:—

"He would visit the farmers, his own tenants especially, and converse with them in the most affable manner. He also visited the poor, sat down in their cottages, and generally ate an apple while he talked with them. Even the schoolboys, whenever they had an opportunity, would place themselves in his way; for he never failed to speak kindly to them, and to give each of them a halfpenny, if he had enough in his pocket to supply them, invariably concluding his advice by telling them to be good children, and to wash their hands and faces. To the cottagers he was also very particular, in requesting them to

keep their houses clean; especially recommending that the rooms should be *swilled,* and he had sinks made in them for that purpose. He not only gave away the milk of his dairy, which was not used in his house; but sent it round to the poor, that they might not lose their time in coming for it." [1]

This quiet life of unassuming benevolence lasted for some years, residence at Cardington being broken from time to time by visits to various watering-places, such as Bath or Bristol Hot wells—a favourite resort of Howard's—and by two or three tours abroad, undertaken partly for pleasure, and partly for the benefit of his health. In 1767 he made a short tour in Holland with his brother-in-law, Edward Leeds; and two years later a longer journey was undertaken, and the best part of two years was spent by him upon the Continent. The course of his travels was somewhat erratic. Starting through France he visited Geneva, where he spent some weeks. From thence he proceeded to Milan and Turin, with the intention of spending the winter at Rome and Naples. Conscientious scruples, however, arose in his mind, which he thus records in his journal.

"My return without seeing the southern parts of Italy was after much deliberation. I feared

[1] Brown's *Life*, p. 107.

a misimprovement of a talent spent for mere curiosity, at the loss of many Sabbaths; and as many donations must be suspended for my pleasures, which would have been, as I hope, contrary to the general conduct of my life; and which, on a retrospective view on a deathbed, would cause pain, as unbecoming a *disciple of Christ*, whose mind should be formed in my soul; —these thoughts, with distance from my dear boy, determine me to check my curiosity." [1]

Influenced by these motives Howard made his way back, *viâ* Geneva and Paris, to Holland, intending to return home. But the state of his health was such that a more prolonged absence from Cardington seemed desirable. He therefore determined to retrace his steps, and carry out his original intention of spending some time in Italy. Accordingly, in March 1770, he returned to Paris, and again journeyed south, visiting several places in France, and so on to Italy, where some time was passed in Florence, Naples, and Rome. Thence he made his way during the summer to Loretto, Bologna, and Venice, crossed the Tyrol into Germany, and, after visiting various towns there, came down the Rhine to Holland, where we find him at the end of August ready to return in a few weeks to England.

Several letters written during this tour have

[1] Field's *Correspondence of John Howard*, p. 23.

been preserved, some to the Rev. Joshua Symonds, a Congregationalist minister at Bedford, and a close personal friend of Howard, and some to Lady Mary Whitbread. These are interesting, as showing the bent of Howard's mind at the time; and as specimens of them the following seem worth inserting here. Others may be found in Brown's *Life of Howard* and Field's *Correspondence.*"

John Howard to the Rev. J. Symonds.

"ABBEVILLE, *January 4th*, 1770.

"DEAR SIR,—Having an opportunity, by an Italian gentleman with whom I have travelled, I thought a few lines would not be unacceptable. After I landed in France, my first object was Geneva, where I spent some time before I went into Italy. The luxury and wickedness of the inhabitants would ever give a thinking mind pain, amidst the richest country, abounding with the noblest productions of human power and skill. I was seven days re-crossing the Alps. The weather was very cold; the thermometer 11° below the freezing point. The quick descent by sledges on the snow, and other particulars, may perhaps afford a little entertainment some winter's evening. I returned to Geneva. There are some exemplary persons; yet the principles of one of the vilest men (Voltaire) with the corruptions of the French, who are within one mile of the city, have greatly debased its ancient purity and splendour. I

spent about ten days at the dirty city of Paris. The streets are so narrow, and no footpaths, that there is no stirring except in a coach; and as to their hackney carriages, they are abominable. There were but few English at Paris. I dined with about twenty at our ambassador's (Lord Harcourt). I am now on my route to Holland, a favourite country of mine; the only one, except our own, where propriety and elegance are mixed. Above all, I esteem it for religious liberty.

"Thus, dear sir, I am travelling from one country to another; and I trust, with some good hope, through abundant grace, to a yet better. My knowledge of human nature should be enlarged by seeing more of the tempers, tastes, and dispositions of different people;—but shudder, my soul, at the glimpse of a thought of its dignity and excellence—for 'how is the gold become dross!'

"I bless God I am well. I have a calm and easy flow of spirits. I am preserved and supported through not a little fatigue. My thoughts are often with you on the Sabbath day. I always loved my Cardington and Bedford friends; but I think distance makes me love them more. But I must conclude, with my affectionate remembrance of them; and my ardent wish, desire, and prayer for your success in promoting the honour of God, and the love of our Divine Redeemer.—I am truly, your affectionate friend, etc.,

"John Howard."

John Howard to Lady Mary Whitbread.

"ROME, *June 13th*, 1770.

"MADAM,—I have just received a very obliging letter, on my return from Naples. When ladies condemn we must plead guilty, and hope our judges are merciful; so I enter not on my defence. Since I had the pleasure of writing to Mr. Whitbread from Genoa, I have visited Leghorn, Pisa, and Florence. In those places, as indeed both in Rome and Naples, I often see paintings of the first and second class, leaving all inferior ones. I confess that I had seen nothing before I came to Rome. I had often read of the Laocoon, the Apollo, the Gladiators, the Pantheon and Coliseum, the paintings of Raphael, Titian, and Guido, yet the description fell far short,—as it does also of the magnificence and elegance of St. Peter's. To that church and the Vatican I go most evenings, the views from the latter being inexpressibly fine. The Pope I have often seen. The worthy good man dispenses with my kneeling. I should tremble to pay that homage to any human creature that I have seen paid to him. The Pretender passed close by me yesterday, and I had a full strong view of him. He had the look of a mere sot—very stupid, dull, and bending double; quite altered to when I saw him twenty years ago in France.

"The situation of Naples is fine. As I have the best *cartes*, it may afford your ladyship some pleasure to see them. I ascended Mount Vesuvius; and when I was up three parts of

the hill, the earth was, by my thermometer, somewhat warmer than the atmosphere. I then took the temperature every five minutes till I got to the top. The heat was continually increasing. After I had stood the smoke a quarter of an hour I breathed freely; so with three men I descended as far as they would go with me, where the earth or brimstone was so heated that, in frequent experiments, it raised my thermometer to 240°, which is near 30° hotter than boiling water, and in some places it fired some paper I put in. As these experiments have never before been made, I thought the account of them might afford your ladyship some entertainment.

"We begin to have hot weather here, so I shall make my pilgrimage in the night to Loretto, and from thence to Venice, where I shall stay about a fortnight, when I think I shall take my route through Germany to my favourite country, Holland. When at Rotterdam I shall hope to be favoured with a letter, though, I believe, I shall hardly be there till the middle or latter end of September, as I seldom fix any route or time in any place. This uncertainty prevents my hearing so often from my friends as I could wish. Permit me to say, I am, with much esteem,—Your ladyship's obliged and most obedient servant,

"John Howard.

"*P.S.*—My best compliments to Mr. Whitbread."

The same to the same.

"The Hague, *August 28th*, 1770.

"My Lady,—On my arrival last week in Holland, I had the pleasure to find a very obliging letter from you. I greatly rejoice to hear of your own and Mr. Whitbread's health, yet I feel some concern for my young friend.

"I came down the Rhine, and stayed some time both at Mentz and Cologne, which were not new to me, nor were Aix-la-Chapelle or Spa, though the great alterations made me hardly recollect that place. It seemed an English colony—there were four hundred; but I give the preference to many of our own public places, as Scarborough, Matlock, Bristol, etc. Indeed in Italy, however magnificent the objects, and highly elegant the curiosities may be, we in England have the solid, the substantial, and important, which we ought to value above all the rest.

"I have been well gratified with foreign elegance, and shall sit down at home in peace; as the comfortable, useful, and honourable life should be our aim. I am sure I require the most favourable allowance of my friends. I intend to be in England in about a fortnight; yet permit me on this side of the water, to present my thanks for the favour of your very kind letters. I beg to be remembered to my friend, who need not fear growing too fat. In expectation of the pleasure of so soon seeing him, I am, my Lady,—Your ladyship's obliged and obedient servant,

"John Howard."

Howard wrote in good spirits; but the tour does not appear to have been entirely successful in removing the depression from which he suffered, or in the restoration of his health, for we find that his residence at Cardington continued to be broken by visits to various watering-places. In fact, at this period of his life, it looks very much as if he was in danger of thinking too much about his health, and of becoming a confirmed valetudinarian, a fate from which he was happily saved by the absorbing interest of the career of active benevolence on which he was so soon to enter. Before, however, passing on to describe this, a curious episode, which took place soon after his return from his prolonged continental tour deserves notice, and something must also be said on the much controverted question of Howard's treatment of his son.

There was no Congregational Chapel at Cardington, and, when at home, Howard was in the habit of spending his Sundays in Bedford, where he had fitted up for his convenience a small house near the "old meeting-house" where he worshipped—the same in which John Bunyan had once ministered. Of this the Rev. Joshua Symonds, mentioned above, was the minister. The question of the propriety of Infant Baptism, and of the right method of administering the sacrament, whether by immersion or affusion,

was at that time regarded as an open one among the Independents or Congregationalists, to whom the old meeting-house belonged, and in spite of the tradition of Bunyan's day the custom there had latterly been to administer baptism to infants. Consequently, no little excitement was caused by the pastor's public announcement, on Feb. 9, 1772, that he had changed his views on the subject, and could no longer conscientiously practise infant baptism. The congregation was sharply divided on the question. The majority seems to have supported Mr. Symonds, but a considerable minority determined to secede and form a separate congregation on the old lines. In this proceeding Howard took a leading part. He interested himself greatly in the building of the new meeting-house, not only subscribing liberally towards it, but also lending without interest a considerable sum that was required to meet a deficit. He did not, however, allow the secession in any way to interfere with his friendly relations with Mr. Symonds, nor did he withdraw his subscriptions in aid of his work, but continued them to the end of his life. While the new meeting-house for the seceders was in course of erection temporary premises were taken, the services at which were conducted by various ministers, and among the number was a young man fresh from college, a son of the Rev.

M. Townsend who had been Howard's pastor in the old days at Stoke Newington; and Brown in his *Life* quotes some recollections of young Townsend which give us an interesting picture of Howard's Sundays. Townsend found, to his pleasure, that he was to be Howard's guest for the four Sundays on which he was told off to take the duty at Bedford. "He found him not disposed to talk much; and supposed that he talked to him less than he would otherwise have done, because he was young in years, and almost boyish in appearance; besides, that he sat but a short time at table, and was in motion during the whole day. On the Sabbath he ate little or no dinner, and spent the interval between the morning and afternoon service in a private room, alone. He had prayer in his family every day, morning and evening, and read the Scriptures himself; but asked his guest to pray. He was very abstemious, lived chiefly upon vegetables, ate little animal food, and drank no wine or spirits. He hated praise; and when Mr. Townsend once mentioned to him his labours of benevolence, he spoke of them slightingly, as a whim of his, and immediately changed the subject."[1]

The first minister appointed to the new meeting-house was one Thomas Smith, with

[1] Brown's *Life*, p. 115.

whom Howard formed one of the closest friendships of his life. During his foreign tour he was his frequent correspondent, and when at home the two friends were constantly together. Mr. Smith's daughter has left on record that her father used to say that his intercourse with Howard gave him some of the most delightful hours of his life. "Mr. Howard would then completely unbend himself, and give the most interesting accounts of his past travels; open to him all his future plans, all his trials and sorrows—in short, every feeling of his heart, in the most free and confidential manner." The two men used to take long rides together in the mornings, and Howard delighted to keep his friend out so long that he would be too late for his early dinner, when he would say to him, "I find, my friend, that you can fast as long as I can; but now you must go to Cardington and spend the day with me, as Mrs. Smith will have dined long before this time." [1]

It will be remembered that, on his wife's death, Howard was left with the care of a little boy only a few days old. The story of the poor child's life is an unhappy one, and as Howard's treatment of his son has been made the subject of some controversy it cannot be altogether

[1] Stoughton's *John Howard*, p. 85.

passed over here. There is no doubt that his ideas on education were peculiar. The boy was brought up on Spartan principles, and subjected to a sterner discipline than was wise. Indeed Aikin admits that, in after years, Howard "was sensible that he had in some measure mistaken the mode of forming his son to that character he wished him to acquire." [1] But there is also no doubt whatever that he was at heart a most affectionate father, devoted to his child, and that, whatever severity of treatment there may have been was caused, not by unkindness, but by an injudicious attempt to carry out his principles. Frequent references in his diary and correspondence show that his "ever-dear boy" was constantly in his thoughts. It is impossible to read them without feeling that they are of themselves amply sufficient to repel the notion that there was any lack of affection on his part; while the charge of habitual cruelty that was brought against him soon after his death was immediately refuted by his friends, and shown

[1] Aikin's *View, etc.*, p. 47. It is not a pleasant story which is told by Brown (*Life*, p. 62), as illustrating the Spartan discipline to which the boy was subjected—that on one occasion when Howard, accompanied by his son, was walking in the garden with a lady, the poor child was bidden to take off his shoes, and walk as best he could without them, till his father ordered him to put them on again.

to rest on a glaring exaggeration and ridiculous misrepresentation of the fact. The story, which is said to have been pretty widely circulated, was that, by way of punishment, Howard was in the habit of shutting up his son in the root-house erected in his garden, and of confining him there all night. Brown, who gives the story, made careful investigation into the truth of it, and states the result of his inquiries as follows:

"One afternoon, as he was walking with the child in the garden, according to his usual practice, whilst the servants were at dinner, he took him into the root-house, and, after having been engaged in playing with him for some time, he sat him down upon the matted bench, and, being called away at the moment by the arrival of a gentleman who wished particularly to see him, told him to stay there until he returned. His mind being occupied with the business upon which he had been brought into the house, he unfortunately forgot the child and the situation in which he had left him; and it was two or three hours before he came into his mind, when he hastened to the root-house, and found him sitting very contentedly where he had placed him. On finding that the child had been left so long alone, he was very much vexed with himself at his absence of mind, and took him immediately in his arms into the house; telling

him at the same time, in his most affectionate manner, that he had quite forgotten him."

The story, Brown says, was well known to Howard's friends, and to some of his servants, who had a distinct recollection of it.[1] Yet on this simple accident the absurd charge of habitual cruelty has been based; for it was nothing but a baseless calumny which suggested that young Howard's subsequent unhappy career, and the hopeless insanity which overtook him at an early age, were due to the sufferings he was made to endure as a child. This notion was suggested in a singularly ungenerous notice of Howard which appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*[2] immediately after his death. Not a particle of evidence was ever brought forward to confirm it, and against it may be set the unanimous testimony of those who were acquainted with the family, and remembered young Howard as a child. The witness of several of these, including personal friends and domestic servants, is quoted in Brown's *Life*; and it is perfectly clear that, while Howard had a horror of anything like indulgence, and had a great belief in the efficacy of "firmness," on which he evidently prided himself, there was, beyond the Spartan discipline to which he subjected him,

[1] Brown's *Life*, p. 59.

[2] *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lx. p. 277.

never anything of harshness or unkindness in his treatment of his son. As time went on, he was increasingly absorbed in the philanthropic labours to which he had devoted himself. But the boy was never allowed to run wild. Careful provision was made for his training and education; and a review of the dates of the father's several journeys suggests that he often timed them so as to be at home for the holidays, and that he was anxious, when possible, to remain at Cardington, until his son was safely despatched again to school.

We can well believe that the childhood of young Howard, like that of many another motherless boy, with a father immersed in occupations which perpetually took him away from home, must have been a lonely one. But there is no sort of reason to imagine that it was rendered unhappy by any lack of natural affection, or want of proper care on the part of the surviving parent.

CHAPTER IV

HOWARD'S EARLY INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE CONDITION OF PRISONS

Appointed High Sheriff of Bedford—Discoveries as to Treatment of Prisoners—Practical Efforts to remove Hardships—A New Career—Burke's Panegyric—Cowper's Lines on Howard—Method of Travelling—Proceedings in Parliament—Howard before the House of Commons—A new Subject of Inquiry—Howard a Candidate for Parliament—Foreign Tours—Attempts to gain Admission to the Bastile—Letter from Abroad—Further Tours—Howard at Warrington—Publication of *The State of Prisons*—Description of the Work.

SO far there has been nothing remarkable in Howard's life. His desire has been to "sit down at home in peace," and to lead a "comfortable, useful, and honourable life." He realised his duty as a landlord far better than the great majority of country squires of his day, but that was all. He was now in his forty-sixth year, and there seemed every prospect that he would settle down permanently to a quiet life at Cardington,

amusing himself with his thermometers, planting trees, building cottages, interesting himself in their drainage and water supply, exercising patriarchal discipline over his tenants, chatting with them and eating apples at their doors, with no further ambition, and no desire to make himself useful on a larger scale. That which completely changed the character of his life was his experience as High Sheriff of the County of Bedford. To this office he was appointed in 1773. It will be remembered that he was a dissenter, and thus, by the provisions of the Test Act, was liable to severe penalties if he failed to qualify by receiving Holy Communion, according to the order of the Church of England. He had regularly attended his parish church during his wife's lifetime, and his relations with the Vicar of Cardington were always of the most friendly character, but there is no evidence that he had ever received the Holy Communion; and he was certainly the last man to receive it merely as a qualification for a civil office. Happily the law was not very vigorously enforced. No notice was taken of his failure to comply with its provisions, and he served his year of office without any objection being raised to him.

Up till this time Howard had never shown any special interest in the condition of prisoners confined in gaol, nor was he more familiar with the

details of the law concerning them than a quiet country gentleman of a retiring disposition might naturally be expected to be. Accordingly, at the first Assize he was called upon to attend, it was a great shock to him to discover that a number of prisoners who were acquitted were nevertheless carried back to prison and once more confined there, simply on the ground that they had not paid the customary fees due to the gaoler and to "the tipstaff for being taken into custody"; for, strange and almost incredible as it may seem to us, if through some stupid mistake of a blundering constable or justice's clerk, a person was unlucky enough to be arrested, however innocent he might be, it was impossible for him to regain his liberty without first having paid the bill presented to him for the privilege of being taken up, conducted to gaol, and lodged there.

John Bunyan's publisher, Francis Smith, has left us an account of his experiences when thrown into gaol, for "having a hand in printing and compiling dangerous books," in which he says, "I was locked up in a room where I had neither chair nor stool to rest upon, and yet ten shillings per week must be the price, and before I had been there three nights £7, 15s. was demanded for present fees. That is to say, £5 to excuse me for wearing irons, ten shillings for my entrance week lodging, five shillings for sheets, five shillings for "garnish"

money,[1] and the rest for turnkey's fees." [2] This was in 1660, but the century which had passed since then had brought with it little or no change for the better. Thus, at the county gaol of Howard's own town of Bedford, there was a printed notice signed by the gaoler—

"All persons that come to this place, either by warrant, committment, or verbally, must pay, before discharged, fifteen shillings and four pence to the gaoler, and two shillings to the turnkey."

Elsewhere, as in the table of rates and fees to be taken by the gaoler for the county of Salop, settled by the justices of the peace for the said county, such a notice as this appeared—

"To the gaoler, for the discharge of every person charged with felony, or other crime, or as an accessory thereto, against whom no bill of indictment shall be found by the Grand Jury, or who on his or her trial shall be acquitted, or who shall be discharged by proclamation for want of prosecution—

If at assizes	.	£0 13 4
If at sessions	.	0 9 0"

In the case of a debtor it was quite a common occurrence for the fees thus demanded to reach a larger sum than the original amount for which the unhappy wretch was incarcerated. The debt

[1] On the meaning of this, see below, p. 72.

[2] See Brown's *Life of John Bunyan*, p. 182.

might be paid, but still the poor creature was compelled to languish in prison until somehow or other he had satisfied the demands made upon him by the officials. Instances of this are frequently recorded by Howard, and he tells us further that "many young creatures, when their term is expired, are detained in prison; others stript of a remaining handkerchief, apron, or petticoat. Such necessaries have I seen left with the keepers till they could bring their fees."[1]

Such were the evils which first attracted his attention; and here is the account which he himself has left us in the Introduction to his book on Prisons of his discovery, and of the endeavours which he made to remove the hardship.

"The distress of prisoners, of which there are few who have not some imperfect idea, came more immediately under my notice when I was Sheriff of the county of *Bedford*; and the circumstance which so excited me to activity in their behalf was, the seeing some—who by the verdict of juries were declared *not guilty*; some—on whom the grand jury did not find such an appearance of guilt as subjected them to trial; and some—whose prosecutors did not appear against them: —after having been confined for months, dragged back to gaol, and locked up again till they should pay *sundry fees* to the gaoler, the clerk of assize, etc.

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 40.

"In order to redress this hardship, I applied to the justices of the county, for a salary to the *gaoler,* in lieu of his fees. The bench were properly affected with the grievance, and willing to grant the relief desired; but they wanted a precedent for charging the county with the expense. I therefore rode into several neighbouring counties in search of one; but I soon learnt that the same injustice was practised in them; and, looking into the prisons, I beheld scenes of calamity, which I grew daily more and more anxious to alleviate. In order, therefore, to gain a more perfect knowledge of the particulars and extent of it by various and accurate observation, I visited most of the *county gaols* in England."[1]

The effect of the discoveries which Howard thus made, and of the sights and scenes which he now saw for the first time, was to start him on a career of benevolence which was only terminated by his death. His whole course of life was changed. From this time onwards he was constantly in the saddle. Journey succeeded to journey with bewildering rapidity. He was hardly ever at home for more than a few weeks at a time. Occasionally, especially during his boy's holidays, a short time of rest was spent at Cardington; but no sooner were the holidays over than he was off

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 1.

again on a tour of inspection, investigating the condition of every prison and house of correction in England, or carrying on his researches in Scotland and Ireland, and extending them far beyond the borders of his own country, so that in the course of his seventeen years of untiring exertions, in the noble words of Burke's famous panegyric, he "visited all Europe—not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces or the stateliness of temples; nor to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur; nor to form a scale of the curiosity of modern art; nor to collect medals, or collate manuscripts—but to dive into the depths of dungeons, to plunge into the infection of hospitals, to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain, to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, and compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries. His plan is original: it is as full of genius as it is of humanity. It was a voyage of discovery, a circumnavigation of charity. Already the benefit of his labour is felt more or less in every country; I hope he will anticipate his final reward by seeing all its effects fully realised in his own." [1]

The speech, containing this fine passage, was delivered in the year 1781, and in the same year

[1] Speech at Bristol, see Burke's *Works* (1852), vol. iii. p. 421.

William Cowper introduced into his poem on "Charity" the following apostrophe to Howard:

"Patron of else the most despised of men,
Accept the tribute of a stranger's pen;
Verse, like the laurel, its immortal meed,
Should be the guerdon of a noble deed;
I may alarm thee, but I fear the shame
(Charity chosen as my theme and aim)
I must incur, forgetting HOWARD'S name.
Blest with all wealth can give thee, to resign
Joys doubly sweet to feelings quick as thine,
To quit the bliss thy rural scenes bestow,
To seek a nobler amidst scenes of woe,
To traverse seas, range kingdoms, and bring home,
Not the proud monuments of Greece or Rome,
But knowledge such as only dungeons teach,
And only sympathy like thine could reach;
That grief, sequestered from the public stage,
Might smooth her feathers, and enjoy her cage;
Speaks a divine ambition, and a zeal,
The boldest patriot might be proud to feel.
Oh that the voice of clamour and debate,
That pleads for peace till it disturbs the State,
Were hush'd in favour of thy generous plea,
The poor thy clients, and Heaven's smile thy fee."

It would be tedious to describe in detail the various journeys which Howard made, the course of which was frequently erratic; and often it is only from incidental notices in his book that we are able to trace them. A table of those journeys, undertaken before the publication of the first

edition of his book on Prisons, is added at the close of this chapter, and from this the reader will be enabled to form some idea of them, and can hardly fail to be astonished at the amount of ground which Howard covered, and the rapidity of his movements. He began by travelling from place to place with some moderate degree of comfort in a post-chaise. But very soon he discovered that his clothes were rendered so offensive by the pestilential atmosphere of the dungeons and dens of horror which he visited that he was unable to bear the windows closed. He therefore abandoned his carriage, at least in England, and was obliged to travel commonly on horseback. "The leaves of my memorandum book," he also tells us, "were often so tainted, that I could not use it till after spreading it an hour or two before the fire: and even my antidote, a vial of vinegar, has, after using it in a few prisons, become intolerably disagreeable. I did not wonder that in those journeys many gaolers made excuses; and did not go with me into the felons' wards." [1]

A few further particulars of his mode of travelling are given by Aikin, partly from his own knowledge, and party from a gentleman who had himself had much conversation with Howard on the subject.

"When he travelled in England or Ireland, it

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 7.

was generally on horseback, and he rode about forty English miles a day. He was never at a loss for an inn. When in Ireland, or the Highlands of Scotland, he used to stop at one of the poor cabins that stick up a rag by way of sign, and get a little milk. When he came to the town he was to sleep at, he bespoke a supper with wine and beer like another traveller, but made his man attend him, and take it away, while he was preparing his bread and milk. He always paid the waiters, postillions, etc., liberally, because he would have no discontent or dispute, nor suffer his spirits to be agitated for such a matter; saying that, in a journey that might cost three or four hundred pounds, fifteen or twenty pounds addition was not worth thinking about. When he travelled on the Continent, he usually went post in his own chaise, which was a German one that he bought for the purpose. He never stopped till he came to the town he meant to visit, but travelled all night if necessary; and from habit could sleep very well in the chaise for several nights together. In the last tour but one he travelled twenty days and nights together without going to bed, and found no inconvenience from it. He used to carry with him a small tea-kettle, some cups, a little pot of sweetmeats, and a few loaves. At the post-house he could get his water boiled, send out for milk,

and make his repast, while his men went to the *auberge*." [1]

Howard's earliest tours, which were made in the autumn and winter of 1773-1774 were not without immediate result, for in March 1774 he was examined before a Committee of the House of Commons. The attention of Parliament had been drawn to the condition of prisoners in gaol by a Mr. Popham, member for Taunton, who had actually introduced a Bill to effect the reform in the matter of fees which Howard so earnestly desired, as early as February 1773, some months before Howard himself had begun his investigations. The Bill after being read a second time was dropped in Committee, but was introduced again in the following session, in 1774. It was on this occasion that Howard was examined before a Committee of the whole House; and so great was the impression made by the evidence which, from his personal observations, he was able to give, that, upon the House resuming, the Chairman reported that "he was directed by the Committee to move the House, that John Howard, Esq., be called in to the bar, and that Mr. Speaker do acquaint him that the House are very sensible of the humanity and zeal which have led him to visit the several gaols of this kingdom, and to communicate to the House the interesting ob-

[1] Aikin's *View, etc.*, p. 224.

servations he has made upon that subject." [1] The motion was carried *nem. con.*, and Howard was summoned to the bar to receive the thanks of the House, an honour which he greatly appreciated, as he showed a few years later by the dedication of his work on *The State of Prisons* "to the Honourable House of Commons, in gratitude for the encouragement which they have given to the design, and for the honour they have conferred on the author." It should be added that Popham's Bill for paying the fees of felons, discharged out of prison, from the county rate, became law in this session, as did also another Bill, introduced at the same time, for better providing for the health of prisoners. Unfortunately the machinery for enforcing both Acts was so faulty that, as Howard's subsequent investigations showed, the good done by them was very limited, and their provisions were frequently ignored and evaded. It was actually left for Howard himself, a private person, to have copies printed and sent round, at his own expense, to every gaol in the kingdom. Perhaps the gravest evil of all was the absence of any provision for inspection, an omission the importance of which Howard at once discerned. Nor is it unreasonable to suppose that it was largely due to this that he felt himself called on to continue his self-imposed labours, and for the rest of

[1] Brown's *Life*, p. 133.



SCENE IN BRIDEWELL

From Hogarth's Harlot's Progress

his life to constitute himself a sort of unofficial inspector-general of prisons and houses of correction.

The greater part of the year 1774 was spent by him in journeys all over England and Wales, new subjects for investigation opening out before him in the course of his travels.

"Seeing in two or three of [the county gaols] some poor creatures whose aspect was singularly deplorable, and, asking the cause of it, the answer was that 'they were lately brought from the *bridewells*.' This started a fresh subject of inquiry, I resolved to inspect the bridewells; and for that purpose travelled again into the counties where I had been; and, indeed, into all the rest; examining *houses of correction, city* and *town gaols*. I beheld in many of them, as well as in the *county gaols*, a complication of distress; but my attention was principally fixed by the *gaol fever* and the *smallpox*, which I saw prevailing to the destruction of multitudes, not only of *felons* in their dungeons, but of *debtors* also." [1]

[1] *State of Prisons*, p. 1. The bridewells, or houses of correction, took their name from a miraculous well of St. Bride or St. Bridget, near Blackfriars. Here there was a royal palace (familiar to readers of Shakespeare as the scene of the third act of Henry VIII.) This palace standing idle in the reign of Edward VI. was, at Bishop Ridley's suggestion, surrendered by the King to the Corporation as a refuge and workhouse for the unemployed and vagrants. Subsequently it was converted into a place of punishment and reforma-

He was now contemplating making public the results of his investigations; but while disclosing to the country the horrible state of things which existed in almost every gaol in the kingdom, he was anxious also to suggest such remedies as might be found possible. It occurred to him, therefore, that something useful to his purpose might be collected abroad. Accordingly he laid aside his papers, and travelled into France, Flanders, Holland, and Germany. In most places he appears to have experienced little or no difficulty in obtaining an entrance into the prisons. France was an exception. At the Bastile, to his great disappointment, he failed altogether, though from no lack of assurance on his part.

"I knocked hard"—he tells us—"at the outer gate, and immediately went forward through the guard to the drawbridge before the entrance of the castle. But, while I was contemplating this gloomy mansion, an officer came out much surprised; and I was forced to retreat through the mute guard, and thus regained that freedom, which for one locked up within those walls it is next to impossible to obtain." [1]

Elsewhere in France, Howard was more successful; but only because he made the happy discovery, that there existed an *arrêt* of parliament for the regulation of prisons, which directed

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 176.

gaolers to admit all persons desirous of bestowing charity on the prisoners under their charge.

To this period belongs the following letter written to his friend Mr. Smith :—

John Howard to the Rev. T. Smith.

"Bruxelles, *May* 17, 1775.

"Dear Sir,—The very kind part you take in my affairs makes me flatter myself that a line will not be disagreeable. Since I left England I have visited several gaols in French Flanders, as almost every one in Paris ; and indeed with no little trouble or resolution did I get admittance into those seats of woe, as, at this time, both at Paris, Versailles, and in many provinces, there has been the greatest riots and confusion. The military patrole the streets of Paris night and day : [there are] daily executions, one of which with pain I attended last Thursday. I came late last night to this city ; the day I have employed in visiting the gaols, and collecting all the criminal laws, as I have got those of France ; however rigorous they may be, yet their great care and attention to their prisons is worthy of commendation ; all [is] fresh and clean ; [there is] no gaol distemper ; no prisoners ironed ; the bread allowance far exceeds that of any of our gaols, *e.g.*, every prisoner here has two pound of bread a day, once (a day) soup, and a Sunday one pound of meat. But I write to my friend for a relaxation from what so much engrosses my thoughts. And indeed I force myself to the public dinners and suppers for that purpose, though I show so little

respect to a set of men who are so highly esteemed (the French cooks), as I have not tasted fish, flesh, or fowl, since I have been this side of the water, Through a kind Providence I am very well, calm, easy spirits. The public *voitures* has not been crowded, and I have met in general with agreeable company. I hope to be in Holland the beginning of next week; the country, especially Flanders, affords the pleasing prospect of the greatest plenty. This dry weather affects them less than in other countries. I beg my best compliments to Mrs. Smith. Remember me to Mrs. Belsham, and any of our friends who may be so kind as to think of me. Permit me to remain, with affection and esteem,—Dear Sir, your obliged friend and servant,

"JOHN HOWARD."

This tour lasted from April to July 1775. In the autumn of the same year a second inspection of English prisons was commenced. This occupied him till the month of May in the following year. It was then broken off, in order that he might repeat his visits to those foreign countries in which he had been the year before, and also extend his researches to Switzerland. This Continental journey over, he resumed his inspection of English prisons, and by the close of 1776 he felt that he was ready to publish. Mistrusting his own literary powers he first took his note and memorandum books to a friend in

London, one Richard Denshaw, a fellow-pupil with him under Mr. Eames, who assisted him in arranging them. They were next submitted to another friend, Dr. Price, who thoroughly revised them and prepared them for the press. After this Howard took them to Warrington in Lancashire, where was the press at which he desired to have his book printed, and where resided his friend Dr. Aikin, whose assistance he was anxious to secure.

Of Howard's manner of life at Warrington Brown in his biography has given us a tolerably complete account. It was, as might be expected, characterised by great method and regularity. Lodgings were taken near to the printer's, and no journeyman printer could have worked harder than Howard himself did. He rose every morning at two, and worked at the correction of proofs till seven, when he breakfasted. "Punctually at eight he repaired to the printing-office, and remained there until the workmen went to dinner at one, when he returned to his lodgings, and, putting some bread and raisins or other dried fruit in his pocket, generally took a walk in the outskirts of the town during their absence, eating, as he walked along, his hermit fare, which, with a glass of water on his return, was the only dinner he took. . . . When he had returned to the printing-office, he generally

allusions in it will, it is hoped, be easily understood from the general description of the state of things which Howard revealed, to which a separate chapter must be devoted.

COVENTRY CITY AND COUNTY GAOL.

COVENTRY.

Gaoler—BASIL GOODE.
Salary, £12, now taken off.
Fees, Debtors } 15s. 4d.
,, Felons }
Transports, £8 each.
Licence, Beer.
Prisoners' Allowance, Debtors, none.
,, ,, Felons; 1 *lb.* of bread a day.
Garnish, 2s.

	Number of Debtors.	Number of Felons, etc.
1773, Nov. 20 . . .	9	7
1776, Jan. 7 . . .	16	10
,, Oct. 30 . . .	7	5
1779, March 26 . . .	11	3
,, Nov. 25 . . .	5	4
1782, May 1 . . .	8	2
Deserters		
4		

Chaplain, None.
Surgeon, Mr. HARPER. (Salary, none; he makes a bill.)

Remarks.—This gaol, built about 1772, is in a close part of the city. I was shewn a fine spot which some gentlemen very judiciously preferred. It has eight lodging-rooms for master's side debtors, and the common ward. Women-felons

have only one room, and that without a fireplace. The men have a day-room. To their *dungeons* there is a descent of twelve steps to a passage only 4 feet wide; the four dungeons are about 9 feet by 6; at the upper corner of each, a little window, 11 inches by 7. All are very damp, dirty, and offensive: we went down with torches. Only one court for all prisoners. No straw; no infirmary; no bath. Rooms might be made for criminals in the area where the old county hall stood; in which case the horrid dungeons need not be used, and the sexes might be separated. Neither clauses against spirituous liquors, nor the Act for preserving the health of prisoners, are hung up.

One of the felons, *James Ward*, received his majesty's pardon, on condition of his going to sea. Mr. *Francis Waters*, clerk of the assize, wrote in the letter which enclosed the pardon (which was dated August 25, 1781): 'The Secretary of State's fee is £1, 7s. and my fee £1, 1s., which you'll take care to receive on the back of the pardon from the officer who receives him.' As no officer would take him on condition of paying this, together with 19s. 4d., the gaoler's and under-Sheriff's fees, I found the poor wretch in May 1782, languishing in prison on his pound of bread a day.

COVENTRY.

A TABLE OF DEBTORS' FEES

As settled—by his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the city of *Coventry*, at the General Quarter Sessions of the Peace held at the said city, the 12th day of January 1778, according to an Act of Parliament, the 32—*George* the II., for the relief of debtors.

	£	s.	d.
Every prisoner that lies on the keeper's side, if he has a bed to himself pays by the week	0	2	6
Those prisoners on the keeper's side, and have a bed between two, pay each by the week	0	1	6
If on the common side, each prisoner weekly .	0	0	6
To the gaoler for discharging every prisoner committed or detained in his custody .	0	13	4
To the turnkey on every such discharge . .	0	2	0
To the under-Sheriff for every discharge . .	0	4	0
For receiving and entering every declaration.	0	1	0
For a copy of each warrant against each prisoner	0	1	0
For every certificate of the cause of a prisoner being detained in prison in order for being discharged	0	3	0

SAML. VALE, *Mayor.* JOHN MINSTER.
JOHN CLARK. THOS. L. SMITH.

20*th March* 1778.—I have reviewed the above Table of Fees and do hereby establish and confirm the same.

W. H. ASHURST.[1]

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 310. As will be seen from the dates given, the specimen is taken from the fourth edition of Howard's work, in which the details of later visits are entered. The plan of the first edition is just the same.

Table of Howard's Journeys between 1773 *and the Publication of his First Edition in* 1777.

1773. *November.* — Cambridge, Huntingdon, Northampton, Leicester, Nottingham, Derby, Stafford, Warwick, Worcester, Gloucester, Oxford, Buckingham.

December. — Hertford, Berks, Wilts, Dorset, Hants, Sussex, Surrey.

1774. *January, February.*—Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Hereford, Monmouth, London.

March, April. — Durham, Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Lancashire, Cheshire, Shropshire, Stafford, Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, Northampton, Kent, London.

June, July.—North Wales, Cheshire, Worcester, Oxford.

July–September.—Berks, Somerset, Gloucester, Hereford, Monmouth, South Wales, Bristol, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, Dorset, Wilts, Herts, Sussex.

October–December.—Lincoln, York, Lancashire, Warwick, Buckingham, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge, Hertford.

1775. *January, February.*—Scotland, Ireland.

April–July.—France, French Flanders, Austrian Netherlands, Holland, Germany.

November, December. — Huntingdon, Rutland, Leicester, Nottingham, Derby, Stafford, Lanca-

shire, Cheshire, Shropshire, Montgomery, Radnor, Worcester, Hereford, Monmouth, Gloucester, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, Dorset, Wilts, Hants.

1776. *January–March.* — Berks, Buckingham, Northampton, Warwick, Derby, York, Durham, Cumberland, Westmoreland, York, Lincoln, Cambridge, Norfolk, Suffolk, Hertford, Kent, Sussex, Herts, Dorset, London.

May–August. — France, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Austrian Netherlands.

September–December.—Wilts, Gloucester, Monmouth, South Wales, Worcester, Warwick, Shropshire, North Wales, Cheshire, Lancashire, Cumberland, Westmoreland, York, Leicester, Nottingham, Huntingdon, Cambridge, York, Derby, Leicester, Warwick, Oxford, London, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Hertford, Gloucester, Somerset, Wilts, London.

1777. *January–March.*—Warrington, superintending the printing of *The State of Prisons.*



COURT OF THE KING'S BENCH

From the engraving in Ackerman's Microcosm of London

CHAPTER V

ENGLISH PRISONS AS HOWARD FOUND THEM

Failure of Earlier Attempts at Prison Reform—Abuses disclosed by Howard—Faulty Construction of Buildings—Gaol Fever—Lack of Discipline—Idleness and Riotous Habits of Prisoners—"Garnish"—Absence of Classification of Prisoners—Lack of Provision for Sustenance—Gaolers—Surgeons—Chaplains—State of Prisoners in Scotland and Ireland.

AT this point it will be convenient to give a general summary of the condition of English prisons, as Howard found them, and of the state of things which he exposed to the public. It should, however, in fairness to others be pointed out that he was not absolutely the first to interest himself in those confined in gaol, or to endeavour to ameliorate their unhappy condition. Even before the close of the seventeenth century an investigation into their condition was undertaken by the recently founded Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, at the recommendation of Compton, Bishop of London, and an important

report was drawn up and presented to the Society by Mr. Shute, one of its earliest and most active members.[1] To visit the prisoners had long been regarded as one of the Church's "works of mercy," and it is interesting to find this charitable work included among the practices to be followed by the early "Methodists" in the days of "the holy club" at Oxford.[2] This was in 1730, just after the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee, of which General Oglethorpe was the chairman, to make inquiries into the condition of prisoners and the state of prisons.[3] The inquiry revealed the most

[1] See the *History of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*, pp. 50 and 54, where the *Report* is given in full.

[2] See Overton's *John Wesley*, p. 25.

[3] It is to this Committee that allusion is made in Thomson's "Winter," in the following lines:

"And here can I forget the generous band
Who, touch'd with human love, redressive search'd,
Into the horrors of the gloomy jail,
Unpitied and unheard, where Misery moans,
Where Sickness pines, where Thirst and Hunger burn,
And poor Misfortune feels the lash of vice?
While in the land of Liberty,—the land
Where every street and public meeting glow
With open freedom,—little tyrants raged;
Snatch'd the lean morsel from the starving mouth;
Tore from cold wintry limbs the tatter'd weed;
E'en robb'd them of the last of comforts, sleep;
The free-born Briton to the dungeon chain'd,
Or, as the lust of cruelty prevail'd,
At pleasure mark'd him with inglorious stripes;

appalling state of things, but still nothing seems to have come of it ;[1] nor were any further practical measures taken for prison reform in this country until 1773, when Mr. Popham introduced the Bill already alluded to, and Howard commenced his researches. Before this, however, the Marquis Beccaria had published in Italy in 1764 his *Treatise on Crimes and Punishments,* which was

> And crush'd out lives, by secret barbarous ways,
> That for their country would have toiled or bled.
> O great design ! if executed well,
> With patient care and wisdom-tempered zeal.
> Ye sons of mercy ! yet resume the search ;
> Drag forth the legal monsters into light,
> Wrench from their hands Oppression's iron rod,
> And bid the cruel feel the pains they give.
> Much still untouch'd remains ; in this rank age,
> Much is the patriot's weeding hand required.
> The toils of law,—what dark insidious men
> Have cumbrous added to perplex the truth,
> And lengthen simple justice into trade,—
> How glorious were the day that saw these broke,
> And every man within the reach of right ! "

The first edition of " Winter " was published in 1726, and these lines were added in the edition of 1730, as was also the passage beginning, " Ah, little think the gay licentious proud," an extract from which Howard placed on the title page of his book.

[1] The need of classification of prisoners, of the exclusion of " all sorts of revel-mirth " from places where offenders are confined, of " labour and low diet," and religious instruction, were forcibly pointed out by Bishop Butler in his Spital sermon, preached before the Lord Mayor in 1740. See Butler's *Works* (ed., Halifax) vol. ii. p. 308.

translated into English two years later. Whether this work was known to Howard before he began his labours we cannot tell. He certainly was acquainted with it later, and greatly valued it, for he refers to it constantly in his own books. But, in any case, the work had not led to any reform in the condition of our prisons when he started on his career; and it is impossible to exaggerate the horrors which he discovered and disclosed.

To begin with, the construction of the buildings used as prisons was as bad as it could possibly be. As often as not they opened right on to the streets, so that the barred windows, to which the wretched inmates crowded for light and air were easily accessible to the passers-by. This naturally led to constant communication between these confined in gaol and their friends outside. Beer and spirituous liquors were freely introduced, the keepers calmly replying to any remonstrances with a confession of their helplessness to prevent the practice. Every encouragement was given to attempts at escape, for nothing was easier than for an accomplice to introduce a file, or even to assist in filing through the bars. Thus Howard notes of Leeds town gaol, which consisted of "four rooms fronting the street, 12 feet by 9, and a smaller one," that "two deserters lately escaped by filing the bars. Since the windows are double-barred

so that no files can be conveyed to the prisoners."[1] In consequence of this, and also of the ruinous and dilapidated condition into which the prisons were allowed to fall, through the unwillingness of the authorities to spend money upon them, the gaolers frequently had recourse to irons, in order to prevent their prisoners from escaping. Men and even women were "chained to staples fixed in the barrack bedsteads," or dragged after them "chains and logs."[2] In one case, where there had been several escapes, owing to the fact that the prison was out of repair, Howard actually "found that the magistrates had sent to the keeper a number of thumb-screws for securing prisoners."[3]

It is scarcely necessary to say that the rooms were badly lighted and badly ventilated. It was the time of the iniquitous window tax; and, as gaolers were required to pay this out of their own pocket, the result was what might have been expected. "This," says Howard, "tempts them to stop the windows and stifle the prisoners."[4] The buildings were frequently so decayed and ruinous as to be utterly unfit for human habitation; the floor was generally damp; sometimes there was "an inch or two of water" upon it; and the straw or bedding was laid on such floors.[5] Proper sanitary provision was almost unknown. At Knaresboro', Howard on

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 414. [2] *Ib.* p. 305. [3] *Ib.* p. 304.
[4] *Ib.* p. 8. [5] *Ib.* p. 7.

his first visit found a single room, about 12 feet square, with a window 17 inches by 6, used as the prison for town debtors, and writes of it as follows :—

"Earth floor; no fireplace; very offensive; a common sewer from the town running through it uncovered. I was informed that an officer, confined here some years since for only a few days, took in with him a dog, to defend him from vermin; but the dog was soon destroyed, and the prisoner's face much disfigured by them."[1]

At Plymouth was a den of horror, known as *The Clink* :—

"Fifteen feet by 8 feet 3 inches, and about $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, with a wicket in the door, 7 inches by 5, to admit light and air. To this, as I was informed, three men who were confined near two months, under sentence of transportation, came by turns for breath. The door had not been opened for five weeks, when I with difficulty entered to see a pale inhabitant. He had been there ten weeks, under sentence of transportation, and said he had much rather have been hanged than confined in that noisome cell. In another room (13 feet by $5\frac{1}{2}$, and 6 feet 9 inches high, the window only 18 inches by 14, and the wall 2 feet 8 inches thick), at my last visit there were two prisoners; one of whom assured me he had been there upwards

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 413.

of seven weeks, and sometimes with four or five other prisoners, where they were almost suffocated."[1]

Under such circumstances it is no wonder that small-pox and the loathsome gaol fever were rife. The havoc wrought by this last disease was something terrible. "From my own observations in 1773, 1774, and 1775," writes Howard, "I was fully convinced that many more prisoners were destroyed by it, than were put to death by all the public executions in the kingdom. This frequent effect of confinement in prison seems generally understood, and shows how full of emphatical meaning is the curse of a severe creditor, who pronounces his debtor's doom—to *rot in gaol*. I believe I have learned the full import of this sentence, from the vast numbers who, to my certain knowledge, and some of them before my eyes, have perished by the gaol fever."[2]

This scourge was nothing new, nor was the mischief wrought by it confined to prisoners. "Multitudes caught the distemper by going to their relatives and acquaintance in the gaols; many others from prisoners discharged; and not a few in the courts of judicature." The "Black Assize, held at Oxford in 1577, was long remembered, when all who were present died within forty hours—the Lord Chief Baron, the Sheriff, and about three

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 389. [2] *Ib.* p. 8.

hundred more." "At the Lent assize in Taunton, 1730, some prisoners who were brought thither from Ivelchester gaol, infected the court; and Lord Chief Baron *Pengelly*; Sir *James Sheppard*, sergeant; *John Pigot*, Esq., Sheriff; and some hundreds besides, died of the gaol distemper." In 1750, little more than twenty years before Howard began his investigations, "the Lord Mayor, one alderman, and many of inferior rank," had perished from the same disease in London.[1] Again and again Howard remarks on the prevalence of the disease;[2] and whereas nearly everybody seemed to regard it as a necessary evil, to be calmly acquiesced in, he was urgent in insisting that it was largely due to want of cleanliness and fresh air, and that if only gaols were kept clean and properly drained and ventilated, it might be entirely eradicated; and events have happily proved that he was right.

Some general idea of the life of those confined in gaol may be gathered from the pages of the novelists of the last century. Readers of *The Vicar of Wakefield* or Fielding's *Amelia* will remember the extraordinary state of things described in them; and Mr. Pickwick's experiences in the Fleet so late as 1830 are familiar to everybody. In order to understand how such things could be it must be

[1] All these instances are cited by Howard, *op cit.*, p. 9.

[2] See pages 255, 259, 261, 280, 324, 347, 360, 391, 401.

remembered that until the reform of our criminal law, which began with the Acts of 1823 and 1824, prisons were scarcely looked upon as places of punishment. They were for the most part merely regarded as places where accused persons awaiting trial were lodged—gaol deliveries being held in some counties but once a year, or even, as in Hull, *once in three years*;[1] or where culprits, duly tried and convicted, were temporarily detained until their sentence, usually either a capital one or one of transportation, could be carried out; or, again, as the homes where the wretched debtors whom a mistaken system deprived of all means of paying their liabilities, were confined, as often as not for the natural term of their existence. Imprisonment in itself had as yet "no regular place in the code of penalties."[2] This fact must be firmly grasped, for it explains much that would be otherwise incomprehensible, notably the entire lack of discipline. If imprisonment be not regarded as a penalty, it may seem natural that no obstacles should be placed in the way of intercourse between those whom the law was thus keeping until they were wanted and their friends outside. Thus visitors were freely admitted, and debtors were allowed to have their families with them. To this Howard frequently draws attention.

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 415.

[2] *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Art., "Prison Discipline."

"Debtors crowd the gaols with their wives and children. There are often by this means ten or twelve people in a middle-sized room, increasing the danger of infection, and corrupting the morals of children." [1]

At Bury St. Edmunds he "always found a number of people drinking, as at a common alehouse." [2] At the Fleet he saw "several butchers and others from the market, who are admitted here as at another public-house." [3] Indeed, he tells us that "half the robberies committed in and about London are planned in the prisons, by that dreadful assemblage of criminals, and the number of idle people who visit them." [4]

The same fact is the explanation of the idleness of prisoners, the fruitful parent of manifold evils. It is true that in the bridewells offenders were committed to hard labour, and so were supposed to work. But, as a matter of fact, there were few bridewells in which any work at all was done, or could be done. Neither tools nor materials of any kind were supplied to the prisoners, and they were left, like the inmates of the ordinary town and county gaols, to spend their time in sloth, profaneness, and debauchery. Gaming and drinking were the principal ways of killing time. Howard enumerates cards, dice,

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 17.
[2] *Ib.* p. 306.
[3] *Ib.* p. 219.
[4] *Ib.* p. 10.



COURT OF THE FLEET

From the engraving in Ackerman's Microcosm of London

skittles; mississippi and portobello tables; billiards, fives, tennis; and says that "in the country the three first are most common, and especially cards; there is scarce a county gaol but is furnished with them; and one can seldom go in without seeing prisoners at play." [1] At the Fleet "on Monday night there was a wine club; on Thursday night a beer club; each lasting usually till one or two in the morning. I need not say," adds Howard, "how much riot these occasion, and how the sober prisoners, and those that are sick, are annoyed by them." [2] The same thing was found at the King's Bench, and "one could scarcely even enter the walls without seeing parties at skittles, mississippi, portobello, tennis, fives, etc." [3]

At both these places Howard found certain printed rules, made by the prisoners themselves, "to be obeyed and observed by every member of *this College*" (as they were pleased to term it). Many of them were arbitrary and improper; but" —he adds in his third edition in 1784—"they are abolished." [4] At the Marshalsea, one Sunday in the summer 1775, almost six hundred pots of beer were brought in from a public-house in the neighbourhood, the prisoners not then liking the tapster's beer." [5] At Newgate some of the debtors

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 13. [2] *Ib.* p. 219. [3] *Ib.* p. 244.
[4] *Ib.* p. 248. [5] *Ib.* p. 252.

had in their apartments casks of beer for sale; and on the felons' side a person stood with cans of beer." [1]

Almost universal was the custom of demanding "garnish." This was a tax levied by the prisoners on all new-comers, whereby they were made to pay their footing; "pay or strip," or "pay or run the gauntlet," being the formula with which they were welcomed; and should the unfortunate persons be unable or unwilling to meet the charge, some article of clothing would be forcibly taken from them as an equivalent. "In many gaols," adds Howard, "to the garnish paid by the newcomer, those who were there before make an addition; and a great part of the following night is often spent in riot and drunkenness. The gaoler or tapster, finding his account in this practice, generally answers questions concerning it with reluctance. Of the garnish which I have set down to sundry prisons, I had my information from prisoners who paid it. But I am aware that the sum is sometimes varied by sets of succeeding prisoners, and the different circumstances of a newcomer. In some gaols, if a felon can pay the debtors' garnish (which is commonly more than that of the felons) he is entitled to the garnish paid afterwards by the new-come debtors." [2]

Again, there was often an entire absence of

[1] *Lazarettos*, p. 125. [2] *The State of Prisons*, p. 13.

classification of prisoners. Even the separation of the sexes was not always properly carried out. Howard records a most disgraceful state of things in this way at various gaols.[1] Few prisons separated men and women in the daytime. All sorts of prisoners were confined together—"Debtors and felons, men and women, the young beginner and the old offender; and with all these, in some counties, such as are guilty of misdemeanours only." "In some gaols you see boys of twelve or fourteen eagerly listening to the stories told by practised and experienced criminals, of their adventures, successes, stratagems, and escapes."[2] There were even cases where the unfortunate prisoners were disturbed and terrified by having idiots and lunatics confined with them.

Almost more extraordinary perhaps may appear to us the lack of any proper provision for the sustenance of prisoners. By immuring them the law precluded them from ordinary means of obtaining subsistence, but did not seem to regard itself as responsible for maintaining them. Sometimes a meagre provision of bread—a pennyworth, or three farthings worth a day — was allowed. Sometimes there was literally no allowance whatever. By an Act passed in the thirty-second year

[1] See the shocking state of things described at Kingston, p. 278.

[2] *The State of Prisons*, p. 8.

of George II., debtors were enabled to secure fourpence a day from their creditors, but this was practically a dead letter; and thus the unfortunate debtor was worse off than the highwayman, the housebreaker, and the murderer. The prisoners were left to subsist upon the voluntary contributions of the charitable, or on the proceeds of such industries as they might be able to carry on in the prison. Cases of actual starvation are more than once noted by Howard.[1] And not infrequently we find such entries as these—"The prisoners, felons as well as debtors, sell at the grates of their separate day-rooms, laces, garters, purses, etc., of their own making."[2] At the windows of York City and County Gaol they were selling "nets, purses, laces, etc.; over it is an inscription on a stone tablet, "He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord."[3] At Lincoln "the debtors make considerable quantity of garters, purses, etc., of a very good sort; most of which they weave in a cheap but convenient hand frame."[4] At Northampton "debtors, felons, and petty offenders were at work, spinning and making pegs for shoemakers. etc."[5] In Leicestershire "they make an annual collection by a kind of voluntary brief. The gentlemen of the grand jury recommend it to the clergy, most of whom

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 39. [2] *Ib.* p. 293.
[3] *Ib.* p. 409. [4] *Ib.* p. 327. [5] *Ib.* p. 334.



POOR DEBTOR'S CELL

From an engraving in the British Museum

promote the collection in their several parishes." [1] At Hull a collection is made from which the debtors receive some supply, on Sundays and Thursdays.[2] "The Corporation"—this is in connection with Yarmouth town gaol, where there was an allowance of a penny loaf a day—"sends out a begging basket three times a week." [3] At Salisbury Howard found outside the prison gate "a round staple fixed in the wall; through it was put a chain, at each end of which a common-side debtor, padlocked by the leg, stood offering to those who pass by, nets, laces, purses, etc., made in prison." Here also he notes, that "at Christmas, felons chained together are permitted to go about; one of them carrying a sack or basket for food, another a box for money." [4]

Not only, however, was there no proper provision for the maintenance of those confined in gaol. In many cases there was literally none for those whose business it was to keep them there. Indeed, sometimes the gaoler not only received no salary for his duties, but was actually required to pay a rent. Of course this meant that he made what he could out of the prisoners under his care. Hence the iniquitous system of fees, and charges not only for the comforts but also for the most elementary necessities of life. Unless

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 314.
[2] *Ib.* p. 415.
[3] *Ib.* p. 299.
[4] *Ib.* p. 376.

the unfortunate prisoners were prepared to pay for the luxury of a bed, or even a portion of one,[1] they were literally required to "lie upon straw," and that often damp and mouldy. Even this was sometimes not allowed; for the significant entry, "no straw," is a not infrequent one in Howard's book. But the gaoler's best source of income undoubtedly was the tap. It was quite the exception for him not to hold a licence for beer and wine. Thus it became directly his interest to encourage drinking among the prisoners.

"Gaolers who hold, or let, the tap, find their account not only in conniving at, but promoting drunkenness and midnight revels, so that most of our gaols are riotous alehouses and brothels. What profligate and debauched company of both sexes do we see let into our gaols, that the tap may be kept running! Even condemned criminals are sometimes heated with liquor until they became outrageous, as Lewis was, who was executed at Leicester in 1782. Besides this the gaoler's interest in the sale of liquors may prompt him to be partial in his behaviour to his prisoners; to treat at least with neglect those who are poor and have nothing to spend, which is the case of

[1] The charge was of course often but small; but in the summer of 1776, the King's Bench in Southwark was so crowded that a prisoner paid five shillings a week for half a bed (*The State of Prisons*, p. 244).

the greater number; while he shall caress dishonest debtors, who take shelter in a prison, in order to live there in riot, upon the property of their creditors." [1]

Let it be remembered, also, that there was no system of inspection; and that the justices, if they ever came near the prison at all, probably contented themselves with viewing the outside,[2] and it will easily be understood what hells upon earth the majority of English gaols and houses of correction were. The inmates were left absolutely to the tender mercies of the gaoler (who often lived at a distance) and his underlings, while the whole system appeared to be framed for the express purpose of encouraging rapine and cruelty on the part of these officials. The marvel is, that among them there were to be found any who

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 26.

[2] Should any justice express a desire to make a closer inspection the gaoler was generally ready with an artifice to prevent him, for "when a gentleman, particularly a magistrate, has come with an intention to visit the gaol, the keeper has pretended the utmost willingness to accompany him, but at the same time has artfully dropped a hint, that he fears that there maybe some danger in it, as he is apprehensive that *the fever* has made its appearance among them. The visitor, alarmed, returns thanks for the kind caution, and instantly leaves the house. On such occasions," Howard grimly remarks, "I have always the more insisted on the necessity of a close inspection, and have generally found the prison very dirty indeed, but no *fever*" (*The State of Prisons*, p. 468).

were at all enlightened or animated by humane sentiments. Yet, in more than one instance, Howard freely accords them commendation for their treatment of their prisoners.[1] Nothing is more striking in his book than his sense of fairness, and, amid all the horrors he describes, and the censures he is compelled to pass, his readiness to seize upon anything in the least hopeful, and to award praise, wherever, on a most liberal construction, praise might be due.

To pass from the gaolers to the surgeons and chaplains: the Act of 1774 made provision for the appointment of both these officers, in accordance with the claims of humanity. But in many instances the Act seems to have been shamefully neglected. Not infrequently it appears from Howard's notes that none had been appointed. Even in those cases where the letter of the Act was complied with, and chaplains and surgeons were appointed, the stipends were miserably inadequate, and the duties attached to the offices were too often shamefully neglected. It actually appears that in one case the surgeon told Howard that, by the terms of his contract, he was excused from attending prisoners confined in the dungeons with gaol fever![2] Yet here also it is pleasant to

[1] Instances are given at Norwich (p. 293), at Northampton (p. 334), and at Newcastle (p. 423).

[2] *The State of Prisons*, p. 383.

record, that in more than one instance Howard bears testimony to the noble and self-denying labours of both medical men and chaplains. At Newcastle "*Dr. Rotheram*, a physician in this town visits the prisoners very assiduously, without fee or reward." [1] At Carlisle "the gaol fever, which some years ago carried off many of the prisoners, did not deter Mr. *Farish* from visiting the sick every day." [2] At Bristol he tells us that "the Rev. Mr. *James Ronquet* has been unwearied in attention to the spiritual and temporal interests of the prisoners, officiating near twenty years without a salary. He had only once a gratuity of £20." [3] At Huntingdon, Howard found to his sorrow, at his visit in 1776, that "Mr. *Brock*, the late chaplain, who officiated very constantly twice a week, and had a salary of only £20, was dismissed. He would have continued his attendance, without the salary, but an order was made expressly forbidding it." [4]

Such was the condition of prisons in England when Howard began his labours. In Scotland and in Ireland things were not very different.

In Scotland the condition of the prisons themselves was as bad as it could possibly be. The following defects were the chief ones noted :—

"They have no courts belonging to them,

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 423.
[2] *Ib.* p. 429.
[3] *Ib.* p. 403.
[4] *Ib.* p. 286.

generally want water, and sewers are not clean; they are not visited by the magistrates; too little attention is paid to the separation of the sexes; the keepers are allowed licenses for the sale of the most pernicious liquors — the consequence of which is, that the county allowance being paid in money to the prisoners, they generally spend it in *whisky* instead of bread." [1]

Howard was, however, struck with the smallness of the number of prisoners whom he found in those gaols which he visited, and attributed it partly to the shame and disgrace annexed to imprisonment; partly to the solemn manner in which oaths are administered, and trials and executions conducted; and partly to the "general sobriety of manners produced by the care which parents and ministers take to instruct the rising generation." [2]

In Ireland, on the contrary, the gaols were crowded; and one reason was, that acquitted prisoners were detained till they had discharged their fees to the Clerk of the Crown, or Peace, the Sheriff, gaoler, and turnkey. "Even boys almost naked, and under the age of twelve, are sometimes confined for a year or two for these fees, though amounting to no more than about forty shillings." At Kilmainham, where there were fifteen acquitted persons confined for fees, Howard succeeded in persuading the officials to relinquish their claim

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 202. [2] *Ib.* p. 196.

to half the fees, and, by himself paying the other half, restored several of these unhappy creatures to liberty. "Some," he tells us, "had children dying with the smallpox, others had hardly rags to cover them. But this distress had no more effect on the clerk of the crown, sheriffs, and gaolers, than to engage them to give up half their fees." [1] In one matter prison discipline in Ireland was distinctly in advance of that in England, for Howard found, not without some surprise, that no liquors were permitted to be sold by gaolers in any of the prisons that he there visited; and on inquiry learnt that an Act of the Irish Parliament had been passed against it some years before. The good effects of the Act unfortunately were not so great as they might have been, for spirituous liquors were freely introduced by others. Thus, at the city Marshalsea in Dublin, "the wives and children of the debtors, living with them, bring in spirits, and this makes most of the lower rooms gin shops." [2] In other matters there was no improvement, and the want of cleanliness may be imagined from the following note:—"The only building designed for a bath, which I saw in the gaols in Ireland, was in the court yard at *Trim*, June 17, 1782. I looked into it, and found it was the gaoler's pigsty." [3]

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 204. [2] *Lazarettos*, p. 80.
[3] *Ib.* p. 207.

CHAPTER VI

FOREIGN PRISONS AS HOWARD FOUND THEM

Absence of Gaol Fever in Foreign Prisons—Better State of things generally than in England — Good Rules in Switzerland and Holland—Less Drunkenness than in England—Abuses—Horrid Dungeons at Vienna—The Ducking-stool—Torture.

HOWARD'S researches into the condition of foreign prisons were made, it must be remembered, not primarily for the sake of dragging to light such abuses as might be found in them, but rather with the object of discovering what might be learnt from them by way of example, for the reform of prisons at home. Consequently, he was always on the look-out for good points, and for such things as might seem worthy of imitation. One thing which impressed him greatly was the absence of gaol fever. This scourge of our English prisons was almost if not quite unknown on the Continent. It is strange that it should have been so, for in many places the dirt and filth were as bad as in England, and the neglect

of elementary sanitary precautions was as disgraceful as anything that Howard had disclosed at home. In Denmark the Stock-house at Copenhagen was in a shocking state. "Dirty beyond description" is Howard's note; and he adds that "the offensiveness of this prison always gave me a headache, such as I suffered at my first visits to English prisons."[1] In Sweden the prisons were "as dirty and offensive as those in Denmark," and when Howard attended at the trials in the Court of Justice at Stockholm, "the want of fresh air, in consequence of the windows being shut," affected him "so much as to make him ill a considerable time afterwards."[2] At Lille, where there were small and dark dungeons fifteen steps underground, he actually caught fever from visiting the sick;[3] but of the gaol fever proper he found no traces anywhere. In Germany he testifies that the Germans were well aware of the necessity of cleanliness in prisons, and that care was generally taken to build their gaols and houses of correction in suitable situations. An exception is noted in the case of the house of correction at Brunswick, where, although the person who conducted Howard over carried a pan of charcoal through the rooms, "his fumigation could not overcome the offensiveness of this dirty

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 78. [2] *Ib.* p. 82.
[3] *Ib.* p. 164.

house."[1] At Lausanne he had a conversation with an eminent medical man, who "expressed his surprise at our gaol distemper, from which Switzerland was entirely free"; and he added that "he had not heard of its being anywhere but in England."[2] In Italy Howard thought that from the heat of the climate the gaol fever would be very likely to prevail, but notes that he did not find it in any of the prisons.[3] Russia was entirely free from it, and he saw no symptoms of it in Moscow, or in any part of the country.[4] At Vienna, where were many "horrid dungeons," Howard thought that he had succeeded in discovering a case. In one of the dark dungeons, down twenty-four steps, was a poor wretch loaded with heavy irons and chained to the wall; "anguish and misery appeared with clotted tears on his face. He was not capable of speaking to me." It seemed a clear case at first. "But on examining his breast and feet for *petechiæ*, or spots, and finding that he had a strong intermitting pulse, I was convinced that he was not ill of that disorder."[5]

There can be no doubt that at this time England was behind rather than before many other countries, and that right principles of prison discipline were far better understood in several

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 71. [2] *Ib.* p. 125. [3] *Ib.* p. 117.
[4] *Ib.* p. 94. [5] *Ib.* p. 103.

states of continental Europe. It was from the prison for juvenile criminals at San Michele, in Rome, that Howard drew the motto from Cicero, which he prefixed to his book; as over the door of this house he found inscribed what he justly calls "the following admirable sentence, in which the grand purpose of all civil policy relative to criminals is expressed":—*Parum est improbos coercere poena nisi probos efficias disciplina.*[1]

The wretched custom of demanding "garnish" from newcomers was almost peculiar to England; at any rate it was "not common in foreign prisons."[2] In France it was strictly prohibited.

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 114.

[2] *Ib.* p. 84. The regulations might not recognise garnish, but it is to be feared that it was very commonly exacted by the prisoners. James Choyce, a master-mariner who was taken prisoner by the French in 1802, certainly speaks of it as if it was common. "We remained five days in the prison at Limoges, where there were a number of French villains of notorious character, who insisted on our paying our footing, and, as we had no money, tried to strip the clothes off our backs. This we naturally resisted, and the jailors hearing the row put us in a separate apartment, otherwise we should have been stripped of every rag we had on. This we found to be the custom in all large gaols, where felons were confined, who, having nothing to lose but rags and dirt, endeavoured to plunder all newcomers, whether French or English; and any poor conscripts, who had deserted and been caught, and were sent from prison to prison till they reached the army, fell a prey to these merciless scoundrels." *The Log of a Jack Tar*, p. 159, cf. p. 175, where Choyce

"If prisoners demand of a newcomer anything of that sort, on whatever pretence; if, in order to obtain it, they distress him by hiding his clothes, etc., they are shut up for a fortnight in a dark dungeon, and suffer other punishment. They are obnoxious to the same chastisement for hiding one another's clothes, or being otherwise injurious." [1]

In general there seems to have been more attempt at discipline, classification, and proper separation of the sexes than in England; and prisoners were less at the mercy of gaolers and turnkeys. In France, Howard found "good rules for preserving peace; for suppressing profaneness; for prohibiting gaolers or turnkeys abusing prisoners by beating them or otherwise; forbidding their furnishing them with wine or spirituous liquors, so as to cause excess, drunkenness, etc. Keepers are punished for this, when known to the magistrates, by a fine for the first offence; and for the second by stripes. They are allowed to sell some things to their prisoners; but the quality, quantity, and price must be such as the ordinances of police define and require. The turnkeys visit the dungeons four times a day; in the morning when the prisons are opened, at noon, at six in the evening,

describes how he joined others in making newcomers pay their *bien-venu*, as it was called, and "lived well that night and day" as the result.

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 167.



EMPLOYMENT OF CRIMINALS IN SWITZERLAND

From an engraving in Howard's State of the Prisons in England and Wales

and at ten at night. . . . If the turnkeys find any prisoners sick, they must acquaint the physician and surgeon, who visit them; and, if needful, order them to more wholesome rooms till they recover." [1] It is also noted that "the nomination of a gaoler belongs to the magistrates. When he has been nominated he is proposed to the *procureur-general*; and if, after a careful inquiry into his character, it appears that he has the reputation of a man of probity, he is fixed in the office, and takes an oath of fidelity. The office is freely given him without any expense whatever; so that keepers are not tempted, by paying for their places, to oppress their prisoners: to remove all pretext for so doing, rents, which they formerly paid to the Crown, are remitted, and the leases given up." [2]

In Switzerland he found many excellent rules. Solitary confinement was the rule for the felons, *that they may not*, said the keepers, *tutor one another*.[3]

Proper care was taken of the sick. The keepers were forbidden to sell to the prisoners, wine, brandy, or other provisions. Gaming of any sort was prohibited. Care was taken for the spiritual well-being of the prisoners, and it seemed to Howard that a principal object was "to make

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 168. [2] *Ib.* p. 169.
[3] *Ib.* p. 124.

them better men." [1] He gives an amusing account of an escape of some prisoners at Berne, and of the way in which it was regarded by the authorities.

"An old keeper having left the door of one of the men's wards unlocked, twelve prisoners forced the outer door, and walked off; the people, who happened to see them, suffering them to pass, because they supposed that they were going to work in the streets. When four or five of them, some time after, were retaken and carried to their old lodgings, the magistrates ordered that they should *not be punished*, considering that everyone must be desirous of regaining liberty. As they had not been guilty of assault or violence in making their escape, the punishment fell on the *keeper* for his negligence." [2]

What struck Howard most in this country, as also in some parts of Germany and Holland, was the excellent manner in which the houses of correction were conducted. Both in Germany and Holland these were white-washed every year. Of the enlightened principles which he found to prevail in the last-mentioned country he speaks with the utmost enthusiasm.

"Prisons in the United Provinces are so quiet, and most of them so clean, that a visitor can hardly believe that he is in a gaol. They are commonly (except the rasp-houses) whitewashed

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 126. [2] *Ib.* p. 125.

once or twice a year; and prisoners observed to me, how refreshing it was to come into the rooms after they had been so thoroughly cleaned. A physician and surgeon is appointed to every prison; and prisoners are in general healthy. In most of the prisons for *criminals*, there are so many rooms that each prisoner is kept separate. They never go out of their rooms; each has a bedstead, straw mat, and coverlet. But there are few criminals, except those in the *rasp-houses* and *spin-houses*. Of late, in all the seven provinces, seldom more executions in a year than from four to six. . . Debtors also are but few. The magistrates do not approve of confining in idleness any that may be usefully employed; and, when one is imprisoned, the creditor must pay the gaoler for his maintenance, from five and a half to eighteen stivers a day, according to the debtor's former condition in life. No debtors have their wives and children living with them in prison, but occasional visits in the daytime are not forbidden. You do not hear in the streets as you pass by a prison, what I have been rallied for abroad, the cry of *poor hungry starving debtors*. The states do not transport convicts; but men are put to labour in the *rasp-houses*, and women to proper work in the *spin-houses*, upon this professed maxim, "*Make them diligent, and they will be honest.*" The rasping log-wood, which was formerly the principal work done

by the male convicts, is now in many places performed at the mills much cheaper; and the Dutch, finding woollen manufactures more profitable, have lately set up several of them in those houses of correction. In some, the work of the robust prisoners does not only support them; but they have a little extra time to earn somewhat for their better living in prison, or for their benefit afterwards. Great care is taken to give them moral and religious instruction, and reform their manners, for their own and the public good. The *chaplain* (such there is in every house of correction) does not only perform public worship, but privately instructs prisoners, catechises them every week, and I am well informed that many come out sober and honest. Some have even chosen to continue and work in the house after their discharge." [1]

To this account is added in a note a story of an Englishman who was imprisoned in the rasp-house at Amsterdam for some years, and was permitted to work at his trade of shoemaking. "By being constantly kept employed, he was quite cured of the vices that were the cause of his confinement"; and Howard was told that at his release he received a surplus of his earnings, which enabled him to set up his trade in London, where he lived in credit; and at dinner com-

[1] *The State of Prisons*, pp. 44–46.

monly drank "Health to his worthy masters at the rasp-house." [1]

It is clear that Holland was at this time far beyond every other country in grasping the right principles of prison discipline; and at the end of the very full account which he gives of the system in vogue there, Howard says: "I leave this country with regret, as it affords a large field for information on the important subject I have in view. I know not which to admire most—the *neatness* and *cleanliness* appearing in the prisons, the *industry* and *regular conduct* of the prisoners, or the *humanity* and *attention* of the magistrates and regents." [2]

For the most part there seems to have been far less drunkenness in foreign prisons than was customary in England. Even then our national vice was conspicuous. In many places abroad spirituous liquors and gaming were strictly prohibited; and only very occasionally does Howard note, as in one place in Sweden, that "the gaoler here, as in the other prisons, sells liquors. His room, like those I have too often seen in my own country, was full of idle people who were drinking." [3] A proper allowance of food seems also to have been more general than in England. It is true that in Russia both felons and debtors had to subsist, as best they could, on voluntary contributions, and "alms received from passengers in little

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 46. [2] *Ib.* p. 66. [3] *Ib.* p. 83.

boxes placed before the windows";[1] but elsewhere Howard generally found that the food allowed was superior in quality and quantity to what was customary in England. In France it was decidedly better.[2] This was also the case in Holland, and so struck was Howard with the provision made at the rasp-house at Rotterdam that he gives the regulation for the daily diet for a week in full;[2] and certainly, if the regulation was properly adhered to, the prisoners here had nothing to complain of.

Turkey is a country from which it was scarcely to be expected that England would have been able to learn much in the way of prison discipline. Yet even there Howard found that, in the midst of much which shocked and horrified him, there were some things which were better managed than at home. Thus he notes that "in those cities which I have seen in Turkey the debtors have a prison separate and distinct from the felons," and adds that "without such a separation in England, a thorough reformation of the gaols can never be effected."[3] Again, he was struck with the stillness and quietness of the prisons at Constantinople, for which he was "at a loss to account," until he "reflected that the only beverage for the prisoners is *water*."[4]

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 87. [2] *Ib.* p. 48.
[3] *Lazarettos*, p. 62. [4] *Ib.* p. 63.

There were of course plenty of horrors to be found in almost every country which Howard visited. Even in those countries in which right principles of prison discipline were understood, and good regulations obtained, the administration was often faulty. In many countries loathsome dungeons and deliberate cruelty seemed to be the rule rather than the exception. At Vienna he found very few of the dungeons empty.

"Some had three prisoners in each dungeon; and three horrid cells I saw crowded with twelve women. All the men live in total *darkness*, and are not permitted to make any savings from their daily allowance (of four *creutzers*) for the purpose of procuring light. They are chained to the walls of their cells, though so strong, and so defended by double doors, as to render such a security needless. No *priest* or *clergyman* had been near them for eight or nine months; and this is reckoned, even by these criminals, so great a *punishment*, that they complained to me of it with *tears*, in the presence of their keepers." [1]

In the same city he noticed that the bakers were punished for frauds "by the severity and disgrace of the ducking-stool."

"This machine of terror, fixed on the side of the Danube, is a kind of long pole or board,

[1] *Lazarettos*, p 66.

extending over the water, at one end of which the delinquent, being fastened in his basket, is immersed." [1]

Strange to say, a somewhat similar practice was not entirely unknown in England, for, at the Liverpool bridewell, Howard discovered a bath with "a new and singular contrivance." At one end of the bath was "a standard for a long pole, at the extremity of which was fastened a chair. In this all the *females* (not the *males*) at their entrance, after a few questions, were placed, with a flannel shift on, and underwent a thorough ducking, thrice repeated. An use of the bath," he adds, "which I daresay the legislature never thought of, when in their late Act they ordered baths with a view to cleanliness and *preserving the health* of the prisoners; not for the exercise of a *wanton* and *dangerous* kind of *severity*." [2]

Bad as things were, it is pleasant to feel that in one matter England was distinctly in advance of most other countries; for although, as we have seen, irons were customary for the safe custody of the prisoners, and there was a terrible amount of wanton cruelty practised by gaolers, yet the deliberate infliction of torture, either by

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 105.

[2] *Ib.* p. 437. On a later visit Howard was glad to find that "this use of the bath was discontinued."

way of punishment or to extract a confession, was happily a thing of the past.[1] This was by no means universally the case on the Continent. In Sweden, it is true, it had just been abolished by the reigning monarch, Gustavus III., who had ordered a dark cellar, applied to that purpose in the great prison at Stockholm, to be bricked up.[2] So also in Prussia, Frederick the Great had set the example in Germany of abolishing

[1] It is the boast of the common law of England that it never recognised torture as legal. In spite of this, however, torture was for some centuries habitually inflicted, both as a means of obtaining evidence and as a part of punishment, being ordered by the Crown or Council, or by some extraordinary tribunal like the Star Chamber. In Henry VI.'s reign the rack was first introduced into the Tower, and under the Tudors torture was in frequent use. A list of the principal kinds of torture employed at the Tower is given by Lingard (*History of England*, vol. vi., Appendix), including the rack, the scavenger's daughter, iron gauntlets, and little ease. It should be added that the *peine forte et dure*, suffered by prisoners who refused to plead, differed from torture in nothing but name. In cases where a prisoner stood mute, he was condemned to be stretched upon his back, and to have iron laid upon him as much as he could bear and more; and so to continue, fed upon bad bread and stagnant water through alternate days, until he pleaded or died. The last case of this inhuman treatment of a prisoner seems to have occurred in 1726, but it was not legally abolished until a year or two before Howard began his labours (12 George III. c. 20). See the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Art. "Torture."

[2] *The State of Prisons*, p. 82.

the cruel practice. Elsewhere it was still customary. Of Hanover Howard writes:

"The execrable practice of torturing prisoners is here used in a cellar where the horrid engine is kept. The time for it is, as in other countries, about two o'clock in the morning. A criminal suffered the Osnaburg torture twice, about two years ago; the last time, at putting to him the third *question* (the executioner having torn off the hair from his head, breast, etc.), he confessed, and was executed. On such occasions a counsellor and secretary attend, with a doctor and surgeon, an *Osnaburg executioner*, and sometimes the gaoler. If the criminal faints, strong salts are here applied to him, and not vinegar, as in some other places." [1]

At Hamburg one of the most excruciating instruments of torture that Howard ever saw was kept and used in a deep cellar of the prison. "It ought," he says, "to be buried ten thousand fathoms deeper. It is said the inventor was the first who suffered by it; the last was a woman, a few years ago." [2]

At Mannheim the prisoners committed to the *Maison de Force* were "commonly received in form with what is called the *bien venû*. A machine is brought out, in which are fastened their necks, hands, and feet. Then they are stripped; and

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 99. [2] *Ib.* p. 70.

have, according as the magistrate orders — the *grand venû* of twenty to thirty stripes, the *demi venû* of eighteen to twenty, or the *petit venû* of twelve to fifteen ; after this they kiss the threshold and go in. Some are treated with the same compliment at discharge. The like ceremony is observed at many other towns in Germany." [1]

At Nuremburg was one of the worst prisons Howard ever saw. "The dark, unhealthy dungeons, and the dismal torture chamber, do no honour to the magistracy of this city." Here he found that the gaoler was accustomed to make use of what he calls "a low trick," to prevent the escape of his prisoners, "by terrifying them with the apprehension of falling under the power of witches" ! [2]

Osnaburg was even worse. Indeed, the state of things here was so disgraceful that Howard was tempted to omit all mention of it; and only inserted an account of it, in the hope that it might lead to some reform. There were seventeen chambers for criminals, with no light but by a small aperture over each door. In one of these Howard found an unfortunate prisoner who had been confined for three years, and had survived the cruelty of the torture, the method of which was "more excruciating than

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 135. [2] *Ib.* p. 130.

in most other countries," and was commonly known by the name of the *Osnaburg torture*.[1]

At Munich, in the *Prison de la Cour*, was a "black torture room," of which he gives the following description:—

"In this room there is a table covered with black cloth and fringe. Six chairs for the magistrates and secretaries, covered also with black cloth, are elevated two steps above the floor, and painted black. Various engines of torture, some of which are stained with blood, hang round the room. When the criminals suffer, the candles are lighted; for the windows are shut close, to prevent their cries being heard abroad. Two crucifixes are presented to the view of the unhappy objects. But it is too shocking to relate their different modes of cruelty. Even women are not spared." [2]

Nothing, however, surpasses the account given of the two prisons, known as the old and the new, at Liège.

"In two rooms of the *old* prison I saw six cages made very strong with iron hoops, four of which were empty. (The dimensions were seven feet by six feet nine inches, and six feet and a half high. On one side was an aperture of six inches by four, for giving in the victuals.) These were dismal places of confinement, but I soon

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 67. [2] *Ib.* p. 129.

found worse. In descending, deep below ground from the gaoler's apartments, I heard the moans of the miserable wretches in the dark dungeons. The sides and roofs were all stone. In wet weather, water from the *fosses* gets into them, and has greatly damaged the floors. Each of them had two small apertures, one for admitting air, and another, with a shutter over it strongly bolted, for putting in food to the prisoners . . . The dungeons in the new prison are abodes of misery still more shocking; and confinement in them so overpowers human nature, as sometimes irrecoverably to take away the senses. I heard the cries of the distracted as I went down into them. One woman, however, I saw, who (as I was told) had sustained this horrid confinement forty-seven years without becoming distracted. The cries of the sufferers in the torture-chamber may be heard by passengers without, and guards are placed to prevent them from stopping and listening. A physician and surgeon always attend when the torture is applied; and, on a signal given by a bell, the gaoler brings in wine, vinegar, and water, to prevent the sufferers from expiring. '*The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.*' "[1]

Passing to France, we find that torture was still customary in some prisons there. At Avignon, where Howard noticed the rings,

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 137.

pulleys, etc., for the torture, the gaoler told him that he had seen drops of blood mixed with the sweat, on the breasts of some who had suffered it.[1]

In Russia the punishments were hideously cruel. In St. Petersburg Howard was shown all the instruments commonly used, including a machine (happily already disused) for breaking the arms and legs, an instrument for slitting or lacerating the nostrils; and the knout, or *knoot*, as he always writes it. He was also present at the infliction of this terrible punishment upon two criminals, one of whom was a woman, who received twenty-five strokes, her companion receiving sixty, after which "both seemed but just alive."[2]

Even in Switzerland Howard found "excruciating engines of torture," at Freyburg.[3] At Geneva he "hoped to have found no torture-chambers," but "had only the pleasure to hear that none had suffered in them these twenty-five years."[4]

[1] *Lazarettos*, p. 52.
[2] *The State of Prisons*, p. 86.
[3] *Ib.* p. 125.
[4] *Ib.* p. 124.

CHAPTER VII

LATER INVESTIGATIONS AND JOURNEYS, 1777–1784

Death of Howard's Sister—Renewed Investigations into the State of Prisons—The Question of Transportation—The Hulks—Act for the Establishment of Penitentiaries—Foreign Tour—Accident at Amsterdam—Letters from Abroad — Visit to a Capuchin Convent — Return to England—Investigation into the Condition of Prisoners of War—Tour in England, Scotland, and Ireland—Difficulties concerning the Penitentiaries—Howard resigns his Office as Commissioner — Foreign Travel — Letter from Moscow—Howard and the King's Courier—Visit to Ireland—Travels in Spain—The Inquisition—Letters from Spain — Second Edition of *The State of Prisons* published.

THE first three months of 1777 were, as we have already seen, occupied with the printing of the first edition of *The State of Prisons*, the dedication of which to the House of Commons bears date Cardington, April 5, 1777. Of Howard's movements during the remainder of the year we have scarcely any notices. As far as we can gather no prisons were visited by him. It is probable that the greater part of the year

was spent in the enjoyment of a well-earned rest at Cardington. In August, however, the rest was broken by a summons to London, owing to the illness of his sister, which terminated fatally before he could arrive, as he describes in the following curious letter to his servant Thomasson:—

"Thomas,—I got to town about seven o'clock this morning, but alas! too late to see my poor sister, and take one final leave. She died five o'clock yesterday afternoon. You will come to town on Friday, bring all my black clothes—butter, cheese, sage, balm, and mint. Ann will buy a mourning gown. I will pay for it. I hope to be down some time next week.—Yours,

"John Howard.[1]

"Lamb's, Conduit Street,
August 13, 1777."

Miss Howard, by her will, left to her brother a sum of £15,000 and her house in Great Ormond Street. This accession to his fortune was evidently not unwelcome. The expenses of his journeys must have been enormous; and we can well believe an admission, made later on to Mr. Whitbread, that he had been somewhat involved by his reforming schemes.[2] But he had no intention of using the legacy for his own comfort.

[1] Brown's *Life*, p. 227.

[2] The statement occurs in a letter to Mr. Whitbread, of June 21, 1785, quoted in Field's *Correspondence of John Howard*, p. 88.

It was regarded by him as a "talent for which he would have to give account."[1] He felt that his son was well provided for, and accordingly he had no scruple in devoting the legacy to the prosecution of his benevolent designs. The house was presently sold, and the whole amount of the funds that accrued to him seems to have been spent in the cause to which he had devoted his life.

Howard's rest at Cardington was of no long duration. The first days of the following year, 1778, saw him busily engaged again on his investigations. For some time he had devoted much thought to the question of transportation, which had been a customary penalty for grave offences for the greater part of the century. It grew naturally out of the laws which prescribed banishment for certain offences, and was definitely established by an Act of Parliament passed in the reign of George I. (1718), whereby offenders who had escaped the death penalty were handed over to contractors who engaged to transport them to the American colonies.[2] The evils which attended the system were manifold. Howard was fully alive to them. He regarded transportation as "impolitic," and as "always injurious to the community." He had, as he tells us in the Intro-

[1] Brown's *Life*, p. 228.

[2] The sums paid to these gentlemen figure under the head of "Transports" in Howard's book, see above, p. 56.

duction to his book on Prisons, "taken some pains to make inquiries concerning the state of *Transports*, with regard to whom many cruelties and impositions were commonly practised, and whose condition was in many respects equally contrary to humanity and good policy." He hoped also that he had "discovered means of remedying these evils in a considerable degree, and of disburthening the counties of a heavy expence with which they were charged,"[1] when an entirely new turn was given to the matter by the change of relations which had recently taken place between England and her colonies. The American colonies, to which the convicts had till now been transported, had declared their independence in 1773, and had thus introduced a dead lock. Their independence was not yet recognised by England. The law still required transportation; but the colonies would no longer receive the convicts. Accordingly, the British Government, making a virtue of necessity, in 1776 passed an Act "to authorise for a limited time the punishment, by hard labour, of offenders who for certain crimes are or shall become liable to be transported to any of His Majesty's colonies and plantations." The plan adopted was to confine such criminals—and it was estimated that provision must be made for at least a thousand annually—in hulks on the

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 42.

Thames, or elsewhere ; and there to employ them in hard labour. These hulks Howard had visited in the autumn of 1776, and he was horrified with what he found there. With characteristic self-restraint, however, he refrained from exposing the evils in his book, which was published in the following year, considering that it was a new departure for which sufficient trial had not yet been given, and that the arrangement was not intended to be a permanent one. He contented himself, therefore, with the following note :—

"I went one Sunday in October last to see the men-convicts on board the *Justitia*, near Woolwich. I wished to have found them more healthy ; and their provision good of the sort ; and to have joined with them in divine service. But as the scheme is new, and temporary, I am not willing to complain." [1]

But although Howard did not expose in public the abuses which he witnessed, his investigations were not without result. He probably spoke with his customary plainness to those in authority. Anyhow, when he paid a second visit to the hulks in January 1778, he was pleased to find that in many ways a better state of things was prevailing, although there was still plenty of room for improvement. Parliament now took the matter up, and a Select Committee of the House of Commons

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 76 (ed. I.).

was appointed to inquire into the measures which had been pursued for carrying into effect the Act of 1776 referred to above, and into the results obtained under it. Before this Committee Howard was examined on April 15 ; nor did he shrink from detailing before the representatives of the country, the horrors which he had generously suppressed in his book. In answer to the questions put to him, he "gave an account of his first visit to the *Justitia*, in which he stated that he saw the convicts all together upon deck, and found, by their wretched appearance, that there was some mismanagement in those who had the care of them. Many had no shirts, some no waistcoats, some no stockings, and others no shoes. Several of them required medical attendance, but had none. By waiting to see their messes weighed out, he ascertained that the broken biscuit actually given to them was green and mouldy, though that which the captain showed him as a sample was good and wholesome, a piece of deception for which he indignantly reproached him, as he convicted him of falsehood, by showing him the biscuit in the face of the whole crew. In every other respect, these poor wretches were as miserably neglected. Even the sick who were only separated from the healthy, if any such there could be in this loathsome prison, by a few boards roughly nailed together, had nothing to

sleep upon but the bare decks. Their drink was water, and many of them told him in a whisper, lest their inhuman task-masters should overhear their complaints, that their meat was much tainted. With so much food for pestilence, we need not wonder that he discovered, in this ill-conducted hulk, a disagreeable smell, like that of a gaol; or that he should express his decided conviction, that had not the Legislature turned its attention to the subject, instead of a third or a fourth part, all the convicts confined here would have been lost." [1] Howard further gave evidence of the improved state of things which he found on the occasion of his second visit, and took the opportunity of bringing before the Committee the disgraceful state of the bridewells of the country, pointing out that they were utterly inadequate to receive the convicts for whom it was necessary to make provision.

The result of the inquiry was, on the whole, favourable to the system of the hulks as against transportation. The Committee recommended its continuance, and an Act was passed to render the system permanent. At the same time a Bill was prepared for the establishment of a proper system of penitentiaries and houses of correction, such as those which Howard had seen and had

[1] Brown's *Life*, p. 232, quoting the *Journals* of the House of Commons.

so highly approved of in Holland and elsewhere. In the form in which it passed and received the royal assent on June 30 of this year, this Act provided for the erection of two penitentiary houses in Middlesex, Essex, Kent, or Surrey, and entrusted the superintendence of the execution of the Act to three Commissioners, namely, Dr. Fothergill, Mr. Whatley, the Treasurer of the Foundling, and Howard himself. Some time, however, before the Bill passed, Howard was out of England, for, in order to gain more information upon this subject, he started, only two days after his examination before the Committee of the House of Commons, on a fresh tour abroad. This tour occupied the greater part of the year. He began by revisiting Holland, where he was delayed for some time by a rather serious accident; being knocked down in the streets of Amsterdam by a runaway horse. He was badly bruised, and a good deal shaken by the fall; and although he managed after a few days to move on to the Hague, he was there confined to his room for more than six weeks by an inflammatory fever due to the effects of the accident.[1] As soon as ever he was able to travel again, he resumed his

[1] With characteristic courtesy Howard refers in a note to the kindness and friendship which he received on this occasion from Sir Joseph Yorke, the English ambassador at the Hague (*The State of Prisons*, p. 66).

investigations. He visited the Rasp and Spin houses in most of the towns in Holland, and passed on from thence to Germany, whence he wrote the following letter to his friend, the Rev. T. Smith :—

John Howard to the Rev. Thomas Smith.

"Berlin, *June*, 28, 1778.

"Dear Sir,—It is with pleasure I heard by John Prole's letter which I received last Thursday (on my arrival), that you are at Cardington; it gives me pleasure to think that a place on which I have employed so many of my thoughts should afford my friend any entertainment. My pain and fever, brought on by the accident I met with in Holland, made me almost despair of accomplishing my journey, or even ever returning to England; but, through sparing mercy, I am recovered, and have now the pleasing hope before me. I was presented on Friday to Prince Henry, who very graciously conversed with me ten minutes, and said, 'He could hardly conceive of a more disagreeable journey, but the object was great and humane.'

"We are here just on the eve of an important event—the king of Prussia in Silesia, and the Emperor encamped within a few miles of him,—40,000 men ready to destroy one another, as the prejudices or passions of an arbitrary monarch may direct. This would be a matter of great concern to a thinking mind, had it not the firm belief of a wise and over-ruling Providence. I hope in about a fortnight to be clear of the armies

and to be at or near Vienna, till which time a thought of England is too distant.

"I have both parts of this day joined with the French Protestants, a pleasure I shall be debarred of many weeks. I am here nobly lodged, drank tea this afternoon with Prince Dolgoruky, the Russian Ambassador, yet I thirst for the land of liberty, my Cardington friends, and retreat.

"Please, Sir, to tell John Prole I observe the contents of his letter; I shall write in five or six weeks, and that I must build no more cottages (as he is still fetching materials to finish the last), till I have quite done with my gaol schemes.

"Through the Hanoverian dominions and that part of Germany I have seen, there is prospect of great plenty of corn, which must prevent it being very dear in England. I take my leave with affectionate compliments to Mrs. Smith, and a kiss for the babe; and accept the tenderest assurances of regard from, dear Sir, your friend and servant,

"J. Howard.

"Thermometer 79° in the shade.

"I beg to be remembered to any inquiring friends at Bedford, that I am well; and in spirits to undertake any enterprise but one, which I hope never more will be pressed on me,[1] as totally destructive of that tranquillity and ease, in which I hope to pass the few remaining years of my life.

[1] The allusion is clearly to the suggestion that he should again contest the borough of Bedford at the next election, cf p. 49.

"Adieu, my friend. Let me share your serious moments.

"J. H.

"To the Rev. Mr. Smith.
Cardington, near Bedford (Angleterre)."

From Germany Howard proceeded to Austria and Italy, countries that he had not previously visited since he began his investigations. To this tour belongs an amusing incident, the account of which is given by Brown. Howard was visiting a Capuchin convent at Prague, and "found the holy fathers at dinner round a table, which, though it was meagre day with them, was sumptuously furnished with all the delicacies the season could afford, of which he was very politely invited to partake. This, however, he not only declined to do, but accompanied his refusal by a pretty severe lecture to the elder monks, in which he told them that he thought they had retired from the world to live a life of abstemiousness and prayer, but he found their monastery a house of revelling and drunkenness. He added, moreover, that he was going to Rome, and he would take care that the Pope should be made acquainted with the impropriety of their conduct. Alarmed at this threat, four or five of these holy friars found their way the next morning to the hotel at which their visitor had taken up his abode, to beg pardon for the offence they had

given him by their unseemly mode of living, and to entreat that he would not say anything of what had passed at the Papal See. To this request our countryman replied, that he should make no promise upon the subject, but would merely say that if he heard that the offence was not repeated, he might probably be silent on what was past. With this sort of half-assurance the monks were compelled to be satisfied; but, before they took leave of the heretical reprover of their vices, they gave him a solemn promise that no such violation of their rules should again be permitted, and that they would keep a constant watch over the younger members of their community, to guard them against similar excesses; and here the conference ended." [1]

After this some time was spent by Howard in Italy, where, among other places, he visited Florence, Rome, and Naples, investigating the condition, not only of the gaols, but also of the hospitals and charitable institutions, of which he had heard much and in which he was greatly interested. From Italy he returned to Switzerland and some parts of Germany which he had not previously visited; and towards the close of the year we find him back in Holland, whence he journeyed to France. Here he interested himself in the con-

[1] Brown, quoting Thomasson's MS. Journal, in *Life, etc.*, p. 249.



EMPLOYMENT OF FEMALE CRIMINALS IN SWITZERLAND

From an engraving in Howard's State of the Prisons in England and Wales

dition of the English prisoners of war who were confined at Calais and Dunkirk, and was successful in obtaining some alleviation of their lot, though he was informed by the French officials interviewed, that they had received great complaints from French prisoners, similarly situated in England, of the treatment which they had there received. The information was of a kind that Howard was not likely to neglect. On his return to England, at the beginning of 1779, he at once waited on the Commissioners of the Sick and Wounded Seamen, and not only gave them an account of the English prisoners in France, but also informed them of his intention to visit the French prisoners in England. A short rest was taken at Cardington during his boy's holidays; but no sooner were these over than he began a *third* systematic visitation of English prisons, in order to see what improvements had been made in consequence of the recent Acts of Parliament. These he was desirous of laying before the public, in an appendix to his book. Mindful of his promise to inquire into the condition of French prisoners in England, he commenced his tour by visiting those parts of the country where the majority of such prisoners were confined. As might be expected, he found that things were very far from satisfactory, for, though the Commissioners seem to have been sincerely anxious to

do their best, yet the prisoners were far too much at the mercy of their local agents, who, in several instances, proved unworthy of the trust reposed in them. Howard, therefore, strongly recommended the appointment of independent persons as inspectors, to report quarterly as to health, provisions, etc. He indicated also a further advantage which would result from such an appointment—

"These prisons are usually guarded by the *militia*, and the sentinels have in several instances shown themselves too ready to fire on the prisoners, in which they have been countenanced by inexperienced officers. Several persons have thus been killed on the spot, though perhaps there was no serious design of an escape. The *agent* is too much in awe of the officers to make due inquiries and representations on these occasions; whereas an independent gentleman would probably exert himself in a proper manner." [1]

The greater part of this year was occupied with this systematic visitation of English prisons, together with those of Scotland and Ireland, to which he paid a second visit in the course of the summer. The month of November saw him once more established at Warrington, preparing an appendix to his work. This was published in 1780, and almost simultaneously a second edition

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 189.

of the work was issued in octavo, in which the additional matter collected in the appendix was inserted in its proper place. Howard was happy in being able to report that in many cases a decided improvement had taken place since he began his researches. Many abuses had been remedied, and the gaol fever was far less prevalent. Indeed he notes that during the course of his prolonged tour in 1779, he only found one person ill of it. He was in Newgate, lying under sentence of death.[1] The appendix and second edition were greatly enriched, not only by the account of prisons in Italy and Austria, and those parts of Germany which Howard had not visited when the previous edition was published, but also by a full account of foreign hospitals, to the condition of which he had, as we have seen, recently paid great attention.

During this same year (1780) much time and thought were devoted by Howard to the subject of the penitentiaries, for the erection of which the Act passed two years before had provided. Personally he had not been anxious to have anything to do directly with the measures for carrying it into effect, and had only accepted the office of supervisor at the earnest request of Sir William Blackstone, and with the express stipulation that his friend Dr. Fothergill, in whose judgment

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 468.

he had the greatest confidence, should be joined with him in the office. These two supervisors were thoroughly agreed, but difficulties very soon arose with Mr. Whatley, the third of the number, and with others concerned in the administration of the Act. Howard speaks of "*constant* opposition" from "some of those whom the Act appointed judges of the situation, plans, etc."[1] Details were hard to settle, and upon his return from Warrington he found that little or no progress had been made with the preliminary arrangements; and that the first thing to be done was to determine upon a site for the first of the penitentiaries to be erected. Howard and Dr. Fothergill were of one mind in recommending a site at Islington. To this Mr. Whatley refused to agree, urging as against it the claims of one at Limehouse. Neither party would give way, and the supervisors being thus divided, the matter was to be referred to the decision of His Majesty's judges; when, towards the close of the year, the death of Dr. Fothergill deprived Howard of the colleague whose appointment he had made a condition of his own. He was now left alone to contend with Mr. Whatley, whose opposition he felt most keenly. Consequently he came to the conclusion that the position was an impossible one, and that, there being no chance of agreement, nothing remained

[1] *Lazarettos*, p. 226.

for him but to resign his office. This step he took at the beginning of 1781, sending in his resignation to Lord Bathurst, the President of the Council, in the following letter:—

"My Lord,—When Sir William Blackstone prevailed upon me to act as supervisor of the buildings intended for the confinement of certain criminals, I was persuaded to think that my observations upon similar institutions in foreign countries would, in some degree, qualify me to assist in the execution of the Statute of the 19th year of his present Majesty. With this hope, and the prospect of being associated with my late *worthy* friend, *Dr. Fothergill,* whose wishes and ideas upon the subject I knew corresponded entirely with my own, I cheerfully accepted his Majesty's appointment, and have since earnestly endeavoured to answer the purpose of it; but at the end of two years I have the mortification to see that not even a preliminary has been settled. The *situation* of the intended buildings has been made a matter of obstinate contention, and is at this moment undecided. Judging, therefore, from what is past, that the further sacrifice of my time is not likely to contribute to the success of the plan, and being now deprived, by the death of *Dr. Fothergill,* of the assistance of an able colleague, I beg leave to signify to your Lordship my determination to decline all further concern in the business, and to desire that your Lordship will be so good as to lay before the King my humble request, that his Majesty will be graciously pleased to accept my resignation, and to appoint

some other gentleman to the office of a supervisor in my place. I have the honour to be—With great respect, etc.

"JOHN HOWARD."[1]

Six weeks later he wrote to his former colleague, Mr. Whatley, who was apparently superseded, as three new supervisors were appointed—Sir. G. Elliot, Sir C. Bunbury, and Dr. Bowdler. They were equally unsuccessful with their predecessors, and the scheme was finally dropped; and a few years later, to Howard's disgust, a return was made to the "expensive, dangerous, and destructive scheme of transportation,"[2] the recently discovered island-continent of Australia affording a place for the reception of those convicts for whom the United States of America were no longer available.

John Howard to G. Whatley.

"CARDINGTON, *March* 10, 1781.

"DEAR SIR,—I was last night favoured with your letter. I have been some time waiting for my dismissal, but I now suppose that I shall only see it in the *Gazette*. No one can doubt of your zeal for the public, who considers the honourable character you sustain as patron to the orphans.

"Though we had an equal right to our own opinions, yet it was an unhappy affair, as it divided the Bench. It was natural to think that both they themselves and the new supervisors

[1] *Lazarettos*, p. 226. [2] *Ib.* p. 147.



CRIMINAL LED ABOUT IN THE SPANISH MANTLE

From an engraving in Howard's State of the Prisons in England and Wales

would wish all contests obliterated, and so they will probably now fix on a spot which has not been proposed by any of us.

"Two eminent physicians had given their opinion against building the penitentiary houses at Bromley (since our old friend's death), which I conjecture may have been another cause of an entirely new appointment; yet the supposition above is the more probable.

"We both have this satisfaction, that we acted for the best; and this we know, we have got rid of a deal of trouble, which would have ended only with our lives.—With esteem, I remain, Sir, your most obedient servant,

"JOHN HOWARD." [1]

Being now relieved from all responsibility Howard was free to pursue his own course. There were several countries of Europe, in which he had not as yet inspected the prisons. He, therefore, determined to make a more extended journey than any he had yet taken. He left England in May 1781, and spent the greater part of the year in inquiring into the state of prisons in the principal countries of Northern Europe. A few days were spent in Holland *en route* for Denmark, where he had never yet been. Nearly a week was passed at Copenhagen, where he saw prisoners punished by being led about the city in the Spanish mantle, a kind of heavy vest,

[1] Field's *Correspondence of John Howard*, p. 66.

something like a tub, with an aperture for the head, and irons to enclose the neck. From thence he crossed the Sound to Sweden, and after travelling to various places in that country he proceeded to Russia, visiting not only St. Petersburg and Moscow, but Cronstadt, Wyschnei, Wolotschok, and Tver as well. It was on this journey that he was present when two criminals suffered the penalty of the knout, and, from what he saw on the occasion, he can have had no difficulty in believing the statement, which the executioner is said to have made to him, that criminals often died under the punishment.

From Moscow the following letter was despatched to Cardington to Mr. Smith, describing his experiences and plans :—

John Howard to the Rev. T. Smith.

"Moscow, *September* 7, 1781.

"Dear Sir,—I am persuaded a line will not be unacceptable even from such a vagrant. I have unremittedly pursued the object of my journey, and have looked into no palaces, or seen any curiosities — so my letters can afford little entertainment to my friends. I stayed above three weeks at St. Petersburg. I declined every honour that was offered me, and, when pressed to have a soldier to accompany me, I declined that also. Yet I fought my way pretty well — five hundred miles and bad roads in less than five

days. I have a strong, yet light and easy carriage, which I happily bought for fifty roubles (about ten guineas). This city is situated in a fine plain, [and is] totally different from all others, as each house has a garden, which extends the city eight or ten miles, so that four and six horses are common in the streets. I content myself with a pair, though I think I have drove to-day nearly twenty miles to see one prison and one hospital. I am told sad stories of what I am to suffer by the cold; yet I will not leave this city till I have made repeated visits to the prisons and hospitals, as the first man in the kingdom assured me my publication would be translated into Russian. My next step is for Warsaw, about seven or eight hundred miles; every step being homeward I have spirit to encounter it, though through the worst country in Europe. I bless God I am well, with calm easy spirits. I had a fit of the ague a day or two before I set out from St. Petersburg, but I travelled it off, the nights last week being warm. I thought I could live where any men did live; but this northern journey, especially in Sweden, I have been pinched: no fruit, no garden stuff, sour bread, sour milk; but in this city every luxury, even pine apples and *potatoes*. Baron Dimsdale and his lady will be on his return about my time: we propose meeting at Berlin, but I am under a promise to visit Professor Camper and Mr. Hope in Holland, who has sent me into Russia an order to see the prisoners of war, so I cannot accompany them. I must also review some places in Flanders before my return. A line to the Post-house at Amsterdam would be a cordial to me. I have no time yet to write to

were confined for fees only. He was glad also to find that the House of Commons had taken up the subject of prison discipline, and had appointed a Gaol Committee to make inquiries, to which he was able to give valuable information. Another subject which greatly interested him was the condition of the Protestant Charter Schools, of which glowing accounts had been given to the public. Of the truth of these accounts he had his suspicions, which the investigations he now made proved to be only too well founded. The schools were in a shocking condition; their administration was radically bad, and they demanded a thorough Parliamentary inquiry. Howard was unable to go into the subject as fully as he desired at this present time, but he made sufficient notes to enable him to add a short section on the subject in the next edition of his book; and, as will be seen later on, he subsequently returned to the inquiry, and made a more thorough investigation of it.

The beginning of 1783 saw him once more starting on his travels abroad. Except Turkey, the only countries in Europe which he had never yet visited were Spain and Portugal. To these he now turned his steps. On the last day of January he sailed from Falmouth for Lisbon. Here, to his great disappointment, he failed to gain admittance into the Inquisition, and was

obliged to content himself with inspecting the other prisons and the hospitals. Entering Spain by way of Badajos, on March 9, he renewed his attempts to secure admission into the prisons of the Inquisition. At Madrid he obtained from a friend an introduction to the Inquisitor General, who received him early one morning, and conducted him to the tribunal, which was hung with red. "Over the inquisitor's seat there was a crucifix, and before it a table, with seats for the two secretaries, and a stool for the prisoner." These very ordinary objects were all that he was allowed to see, as, in spite of his urgent request, the Inquisitor declined to show him any other part of the prison.[1] At Valladolid he managed to see a little more.

"I was received at the *inquisition prison* by the two inquisitors, their secretaries, and two magistrates, and conducted into several rooms. On the side of one room was the picture of an *Auto-de-Fe* in 1667, when ninety-seven persons were burnt; at this time the Spanish Court resided at Valladolid. The tribunal room is like that at Madrid, but has an altar, and a door (with three locks) into the secretary's room, over which was inscribed, that the greater excommunication was denounced against all strangers who presume to enter. In two other tribunal rooms were the

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 160.

insignia of the Inquisition. In a large room, I saw on the floor and shelves many prohibited books, some of which were *English*; in another room I saw multitudes of crosses, beads, and small pictures. The painted cap was also showed me, and the vestments for the unhappy victims. After several consultations, I was permitted to go up the private staircase, by which prisoners are brought to the tribunal; this leads to a passage with several doors in it, which I was not permitted to enter. On one of the secretaries telling me, 'None but prisoners ever enter those rooms,' I answered I would be confined for a month to satisfy my curiosity; he replied, 'None come out under three years, and they take the oath of secrecy.' I learnt, by walking in the court and conversing with the inquisitors, that the cells have double doors, and are separated by two walls, to prevent prisoners conversing together, and that over the space between the walls there is a sort of chimney or funnel, enclosed at the top, but having perforations on the sides, through which some air and a glimmering of light enter. These funnels, the inquisitors told me, are double-barred; and one of them serves two cells. Both the inquisitors assured me that they did not put *irons* on any of their prisoners. The passages into which some of the cells open have small apertures for the admission of light.

In a gloomy area at the back of the prison, there was nothing but a great mastiff dog. It is well known that from *this* court there is *no* appeal. I need not say how horrid the secrecy and severity of it appear. I could not but observe that even the sight of it struck terror into the common people as they passed. It is styled, by a monstrous abuse of words, the *holy* and *apostolic* court of inquisition." [1]

With this scanty information he was compelled to be satisfied, and shortly after he resumed his journey. By the middle of April he was at Pampeluna, whence he wrote to Mr. Smith an account of his travels.

John Howard to the Rev. T. Smith.

"Pamplona, 17*th April* 1783.

"Dear Sir,—I am still in Spain; the manner of travelling with mules is very slow. I was fourteen days betwixt Lisbon and Madrid (400 miles). You carry all your provisions; the luxury of milk with my tea I seldom could get. I one morning robbed a kid of two cups of its mother's milk—but I bless God I am pure well, calm spirits. The greatest kindness I received from Count Fernan Nunez, the Spanish ambassador at Lisbon, through whose recommendation to Count Compomanes every prison has been flung open to me: I have a letter to one of the

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 160.

magistrates through every city that I pass. I have been here three days, but must stay a few days longer before I cross the mountains. The Spaniards are very sober and very honest, and if he can live sparingly and lay on the floor, the traveller may pass tolerably well through their country.

"I have come into many an inn, and paid only five pence for the noise (as they term it) I made in the house; as no bread, eggs, milk, or wine do they sell. Peace has not been declared. Many will hardly believe it; they talk of General Elliot with a spirit of enthusiasm; never were two nations so often at war, and individuals have such esteem and complacency one towards another. I travelled some time with an English gentleman, but my stops for the prisons, etc., not being convenient, he went off with his Spanish servant. I go through Bayonne, stopping only one day, and pitch my tent at Bordeaux, where I have much business, some horrid dungeons, etc. I am still in time for my Irish journey in July and August, as I promised the Provost, that Parliament meeting in October. I have very little more to do in England, before I go into the press, after which I hope to be in comfort at my own fire-side. Remember me to Mr. Barham, Gadsby, and our united friends.—With much esteem, I remain, your friend and servant,

"John Howard."

"*P.S.*—I hope you have fine weather, as I have; every shutter open till night; many towns have

not one pane of glass—thermometer 68° in the shade.

"The Rev. Mr. Smith, at Bedford,
viâ London."

The journey was continued through France and French Flanders, where Howard was detained for a short time by a fever caught in visiting the prisoners at the *Tour de St. Pierre* in Lille, where were confined "three debtors, five smugglers, and four vagrants." Five of these "were sick in a very offensive room with only one bed." To this illness he refers in the third edition of his book. "I have reason to be abundantly thankful for recovery from a fever which I caught of the sick in this prison, at my last visit; and would make my grateful acknowledgment to that *kind hand,* by which I have been hitherto preserved."[1]

After a delay of about ten days Howard was able to resume his journey, and to continue his inspection of prisons in the Netherlands and Holland; and by the end of June he was back in England, ready for his promised journey in Ireland in July and August. A few more gaols in England remained to be visited in the autumn, and then he was ready for the publication of a fresh (second) appendix, and a third edition of the whole work, into which was introduced the

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 164.

fresh information gained during the tours of the last few years. A large amount of new material had been collected by him, requiring new sections on Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Poland, Silesia, Portugal, and Spain. Moreover, he was anxious to note all the improvements—and happily they were not a few—which had taken place since he began his investigations. In his second edition he had been able to omit many of the notes of censure respecting the management of gaols, as to cleanliness, ailments, bedding, and the like, which he had previously thought it his duty to insert, and he was now thankful to erase still more.[1] The preparation of this new edition cost him considerable labour, and occupied much of his time in 1784, a year in which he made no journey, but apparently spent more time at Cardington than he had ever done since he first entered upon his philanthropic labours. He had now been engaged in them for ten years; and in one of his MS. books he summed up the number of miles he had travelled in the course of his various journeys. This curious document came into Brown's hands, so that he was able to append it in a note to his *Life*, from whence it is copied here.[2]

[1] *The State of Prisons*, p. 211. [2] Brown's *Life*, p. 651.



HOWARD RELIEVING PRISONERS

From an old print

An Account of the Number of Miles travelled on the Reform of Prisons.

JOURNEYS.	MILES.
In Great Britain and Ireland, 1773, '74, '75, '76	10,318
First Foreign journey, 1775	1,400
Second ditto, 1776	1,700
Third ditto, 1778	4,636
In Great Britain and Ireland, 1779	6,490
Fourth Foreign journey, 1781	4,465
In Great Britain and Ireland, 1782	8,165
Fifth Foreign journey, 1783	3,304
To Ireland	715
To Worcester	238
To Hertford, Chelmsford, and Warrington	602
Total	42,033

JOURNEYS IN	1779. MILES.	1781. MILES.
1st, Western	534	538
2nd, Southern	368	273
3rd, Eastern	512	803
4th, Kent, etc.	353	516
5th, Northern	957	932
6th, South Wales	580	472
7th, Scotland and Ireland	1151	537
8th, North Wales	690	2030
9th, Nottingham and Hunts	450	924
10th, Lincolnshire and Bedford	500	845
11th, Liverpool, etc	395	295
Total	6490	8165

To God alone be all the Praise! I do not regret the loss of the many conveniences of life, but bless God who inclined my mind to such a scheme.

CHAPTER VIII

INVESTIGATIONS CONCERNING THE PLAGUE, AND PUBLICATION OF THE BOOK ON LAZARETTOS

Howard's attention turned towards the Plague—Sets off on a Tour to inspect Lazarettos — Adventures in France—Letters from Italy — Howard at Malta — Voyage to Smyrna—A Sea-fight—Howard in Action—Quarantine at Venice—Bad News from England—Letters Home—Christmas at Vienna—The Emperor—The Countess—Return to England—Visit to Ireland—Meeting with John Wesley—Publication of the Book on Lazarettos.

WE now enter upon a new chapter in Howard's life, and one that shows his dauntless courage and devotion to the good of humanity in a more striking light than any other. During his researches into the condition of prisons he had given much consideration to the subject of those contagious and infectious diseases which he had found so prevalent in them; and visits to one or two lazarettos on the Continent had turned his thoughts in the direction of that frightful scourge of which Europe lived in constant dread,

namely, the plague. This subject he now determined to investigate thoroughly, and to collect all the information possible for himself, in the hope that something might ultimately be done to stamp out the evil. He thus describes, in the Introduction to his book on Lazarettos, how his plans grew.

"In my latest tours I had with pain observed, that, notwithstanding the regulations which had been made in our own country, and elsewhere, for preserving health in prisons and hospitals, yet that infectious diseases continued occasionally to arise and spread in them. I had also been led, by the view of several lazarettos in my travels, to consider how much all trading nations are exposed to that dreadful scourge of mankind which those structures are intended to prevent, and to reflect how very rude and imperfect our own police was with respect to this object. It likewise struck me, that establishments, effectual for the prevention of the most infectious of all diseases, must afford many useful hints for guarding against the propagation of contagious distempers in general. These various considerations induced me, in the last edition of *The State of Prisons*, to express a wish "that some future traveller would give us plans of the lazarettos at Leghorn, Ancona, and other places." At length I determined to procure these plans, and acquire all the necessary information

respecting them, myself; and, towards the end of the year 1785, I went abroad for the purpose of visiting the principal lazarettos in France and Italy. To the physicians employed in them, I proposed a set of queries respecting the nature and prevention of the plague; but their answers not affording satisfactory instruction, I proceeded to Smyrna and Constantinople. For, although the subjects of the Turkish Empire be little enlightened by the modern improvements in arts and sciences, I conceived that, from their intimate acquaintance with the disease in question, and from the great difference between their customs and manners, and ours, some practices might be found among them, and some information gained, not unworthy the notice of more polished nations. I also pleased myself with the idea, not only of learning, but of being able to communicate somewhat to the inhabitants of these distant regions, if they should have curiosity enough to inquire, and liberality to adopt the methods of treating and of preventing contagious diseases which had been found most successful among ourselves." [1]

The first indication of his intention is given in a letter addressed to his cousin, Mr. Whitbread, on October 26, 1785.

[1] *Lazarettos*, p. 1.

John Howard to Samuel Whitbread, M.P.

"Dear Sir,—For several months past I have thought on a scheme of a new publication, of an 8vo size, for the use of those who will give sincere attendance on prisons, hospitals, and poor-houses. This I had partly resolved on before I came to town; and it inclined me rather to sell than to let my Hackney estate. It will take me about eighteen months to collect new materials (three or four of them I shall be abroad, and shall go to Marseilles), to get plans of lazarettos, and to ascertain their manner of treating the sick. If I thought the French would now confine me[1] I would endeavour to get an ambassador's protection, or that of the Secretary of State. I know such schemes are liable to fatal miscarriages; but I have made up my mind on the subject; so I thought it proper to give you the earliest intelligence of my determination.—With esteem, I am sincerely yours, John Howard."

In November he left England for Holland, intending to start his inquiries at Marseilles, where the jealousy of the French with regard to their trade in the Levant made it a matter of extreme difficulty to obtain access to the lazarettos. An

[1] Howard's apprehension of imprisonment was probably due to his knowledge of the attitude of the French government towards him, in consequence of his having published in French and English a suppressed pamphlet on the Bastile. He had also incurred the displeasure of the authorities, by dissuading some of the English prisoners of war at Dunkirk from entering the French navy.

attempt was made to gain permission for Howard to visit it, through the good offices of Lord Carmarthen, the Foreign Secretary. This was, however, unsuccessful, as Lord Carmarthen not only reported that "it was with some difficulty that even the Emperor was allowed to see the lazarettos," [1] but also assured Howard that he "must not think of entering France at all, as, if he did, he would run a risk of being committed to the Bastile." [2] Nothing daunted by the refusal of permission Howard determined to make the attempt without it. He crossed the frontier and boldly proceeded to Paris. What followed must be told in Brown's words.

"Immediately on his arrival he took his ticket for a seat in the Lyons diligence; and that he might incur less risk of discovery, lodged in an obscure inn, near the place whence that conveyance started. Having gone to bed, however, according to his usual custom about ten o'clock, he was awoke between twelve and one by a tremendous knocking at his room door, which, starting up in somewhat of an alarm, he immediately opened; and, having returned to bed, he saw the chambermaid enter with a candle in each hand, followed by a man in a black coat, with a sword by his side, and his hands enveloped in an

[1] Field's *Correspondence of John Howard*, p. 97.
[2] Brown's *Life*, p. 414.

enormous muff. This singular personage immediately asked him if his name was not *Howard*. Vexed at this interruption, he hastily answered, "Yes, and what of that?" He was again asked if he had not come to Paris in the Brussels diligence, in company with a man in a black wig. To this question he returned some such peevish answer, as that he paid no attention to such trifles; and his visitor immediately withdrew in silence. Not a little alarmed at this strange adventure, though losing none of his self-possession, and being unable to recompose himself to sleep, Mr. Howard got up, and, having discharged his bill the night before, took his small trunk, and, removing from this house, at the regular hour of starting took his seat in the diligence and set off for Lyons."[1] On the journey he passed himself off as a medical man, and acted in that capacity with some success for a lady who was one of his fellow-travellers. At Lyons, although visiting the gaols and hospitals, he avoided publicity as much as possible, the secret of his identity being only entrusted to one or two Protestant ministers. The same course was followed at Marseilles, where, on visiting one of his Protestant friends, he was met with the words, "Mr. Howard, I have always been glad to see you till now. Leave France as soon as you can; I know they are

[1] Brown's *Life*, p. 415.

searching for you in all directions." He also now learnt that the "man in a black wig" was a spy, and that he would have been arrested in Paris, but for the accident of the absence of one of the officials. In spite of the intelligence thus given him, Howard insisted on seeing all that he had come to see, and would not leave Marseilles until he had gained admission to the lazaretto. From Marseilles he travelled to Toulon, where, by passing himself off as a Frenchman, he secured an entry to the arsenal. He was now anxious to visit Italy, but his friends were evidently much alarmed for his safety, and thought that he ran considerable risk of arrest if he attempted to cross the frontier in the ordinary way. He therefore, by the help of a liberal fee, induced the master of a small sailing vessel to smuggle him out of the country, and after some exciting experiences was safely landed in Italy.[1] To his friends at home he wrote the following accounts of his adventures:

John Howard to the Rev. T. Smith.

Nice, *Jan.* 30, 1786.

"Sir,—I persuade myself that a line to acquaint you that I am safe and well out of France will

[1] It has been thought that Howard and his friends may have exaggerated the risks which he ran: but the main facts are beyond dispute; and there is no doubt whatever as to the mysterious visit paid to him in the night.

give you pleasure. I had a nice part to act; I travelled as an English doctor, and perhaps among the number of empirics I did as little mischief as most of them. I never dined or supped in public; the secret was only trusted to the French Protestant ministers. I was five days at Marseilles, and four at Toulon. It was thought I could not get out of France by land, so I forced out a Genoese ship, and have been many days striving against wind and tide—three days in an almost desolate island, overgrown with myrtle, rosemary, and thyme.

"Last Sunday fortnight, at the meeting at Toulon, though the door [was] locked, and curtains drawn, one coming late put the assembly in fear, even to inquiry before the door was opened. I was twice over the arsenal, though [there is] a strict prohibition to our countrymen. There is a singular slave, who has publicly professed himself a Protestant these thirty-six years, a sensible good man, with an unexceptionable and even amiable character. The last person who was confined merely for his religion was released almost eight years ago. My friend may think I have taken a final leave of a perfidious, jealous, and ungenerous nation.[1]

"I am bound this week for Genoa, and then to Leghorn where a lazaretto has been built within these few years. I know, Sir, you will not treat

[1] Howard had the traditional eighteenth-century Englishman's dislike of the French, as the following note of his witnesses, "However I may esteem some few of the *French*, yet their government I dislike—their national character I detest" (Brown's *Life*, p. 421).

any new attempt as wild and chimerical, yet I must say it requires a steadiness of resolution not to be shaken, to pursue it.

"My best compliments to Mrs. Smith, and our Bedford friends; and please to inform John Prole that I am well.

"I write this with my windows open in full view of an orange grove, though the mountains at a great distance I see covered with snow.—With my best wishes, I remain, your affectionate friend,

"JOHN HOWARD.

"The Rev. MR. SMITH,
Potter St., Bedford (Angleterre)."

John Howard to Samuel Whitbread, Esq., M.P.

"LEGHORN, *Feb.* 13, 1786.

"DEAR SIR,—I have the pleasure—the particular pleasure—to receive a letter from you, with the account of my son and several other interesting matters. I came here early yesterday morning by sea from Genoa. I have seen several lazarettos, and have received every assistance from the governor here as I did from the magistrates of Genoa; so I have copied all the plans, and the regulations are given me. I have all encouragement to pursue my object, and I persuade myself it will be of use to mankind.

"I have now taken a final leave of France. I am sensible that I ran a great risk, but I accomplished my object in five days at Marseilles. At Toulon I went all over the arsenal, though strict orders are given that no strangers, particularly no English, shall come in. All business there is

at a stand, and four hundred workmen were just discharged. Three men-of-war were on the stocks, but there was no timber, and there is no money. The misery in the southern provinces is beyond conception. I forced a small vessel out at Toulon, and was a few days in a desolate island. My Protestant friends thought I could not get out by land as my person was ascertained at Paris. They were my friends, and the only friends I could trust, and happy I was to arrive at Nice, out of the country of a deceitful, jealous, and ungenerous people.

"I bless God I am well, with calm and easy spirits. In no way do I alter my mode of living. I have been happy in meeting with good company, so that I got a bed in monasteries, etc. I can bear great fatigue, and when forced into disagreeable company, in dirty houses, I make them, and thus myself, as easy as possible. I go to Florence, Rome, and Naples, as I cannot go through Germany. I hope to see your son *en passant*. Several persons of different countries whom I have met, spoke in the highest commendation of him. I value myself on the relationship.

"I thank you for your letters in Holland. They know of my return that way. I hope all things go easy in Bedfordshire. Your elegant lodge there I suppose is nearly finished.

"Whether I shall be quiet at Cardington a year or two before I die, God knows, but I must say I hope and wish for it. . . . I direct to you the letter for my son. I hope he will find the happy medium, and be a wise and good man.

"May I say that I see the fruits of my labour in France and other countries! I rejoice and

glory in my mode of travelling. France might have deprived me of liberty, but could not have made me miserable; like as in the torture, there is an impassable line. Affectionate compliments to Harriet, etc. A line under your letter to Thompson that I am well. Can yet fix nothing of my servant's meeting me. I go on at a much easier expence.—I am, dear sir, truly and affectionately yours,

"JOHN HOWARD."

"To SAMUEL WHITBREAD, Esq., M.P."

This last letter indicates Howard's route. Landing at Nice, after an adventurous voyage from Toulon, he had proceeded overland to Genoa, and thence by sea to Leghorn, inspecting the prisons and lazarettos at each place. From Leghorn, he journeyed viâ Pisa to Florence, where he was delighted with the great improvement that had taken place in the condition of the prisons and hospitals, "in consequence of the great care and attention of the Grand Duke" since his visit to this city, about seven years before. "The prisons were white-washed; debtors were separated from felons; and the number of prisoners was diminished."[1] Rome was the next place visited. Here he was accorded an interview with the Pope, Pius VI. The usual ceremonial was dispensed with, but, at parting, the Pope dismissed him with his benediction, saying, as he laid his

[1] *Lazarettos*, p. 57.

hand on his visitor's head: "I know you Englishmen do not value these things; but the blessing of an old man can do you no harm." After a fortnight in Rome, about the same time was spent in Naples, where he took ship for Malta, then under the government of the Knights of St. John. Sir William Hamilton, the English ambassador at Naples, had given him a letter to the Grand Master, which procured him admission to all the prisons and hospitals. After inspecting them, he was asked by the Grand Master what he thought of all that he had seen; and, with his customary candour, he spoke out plainly of the many abuses he had discovered. "But," he tells us, my "animadversions were reckoned too free; yet being encouraged by the satisfaction which the patients seemed to receive from my frequent visits, I continued them, and I have reason to believe they produced an alteration for the better in the state of these hospitals with respect to cleanliness and attention to the patients."[1] To this he refers in a letter written to Mr. Whitbread from Zante, to which he now made his way, hoping there to meet with a ship bound for Smyrna.

[1] *Lazarettos*, p. 60.

John Howard to Samuel Whitbread, Esq., M.P.

"ZANTE, *May* 1, 1786.

"DEAR SIR,—I wrote to you from Naples, where I took shipping for Malta. As there was no object in my line in Sicily, we lay four or five days close to Messina, Catania, Syracuse, etc. We saw some of the awful effects of the earthquake; and even a fortnight before there was a shock, which the ships felt at a great distance. I was three weeks at Malta, to see the celebrated hospital, reported to have six hundred patients, all served by the knights, etc., in plate. My letter from Sir William Hamilton to the Grand Master flung open every place to me. At the first visit he promised to supply me from his own table with butter for my tea, and about a pound was directly sent to me, with promises, compliments, etc. In a week after, I waited on the Grand Master, who asked me what I thought of his hospitals. I told him freely my opinion, and pointed out many glaring abuses and improprieties which, if his Highness would but at times look into his hospitals, would be redressed. Alas! here was an end of all my presents; so my tea was ever after with dry bread. I did not, however, cease visiting those places even to the last day, as there was a placidness in the countenances of the patients through the many alterations that were then made. I took a formal *congé* of the *Religion*, as there called, who are detested by the Maltese for their pride and profligacy. In short, they are a nest of pirates, running on the Barbary coast, and catching all

the little boats of fishermen and traffickers in the creeks, bringing them with their wives and children into perpetual slavery. They wear the cross, the ensign of the Prince of Peace, and yet declare eternal war and destruction to their fellow-creatures.

"There being no ship at Malta for Smyrna, I came here in search of one, either for that city or for Constantinople, and the first fair wind one is expected. We have had a bad travelling year, constant storms in this sea; but I am told I may expect good winds, as this sea is bad six months and good the remainder. There is a report here that a large Turkey ship is lost in the Levant, but the crew saved. We have no inns here, but I have a good room in the late bishop's palace, who died last year. I have it to myself, and am locked in, but the old bishop has not yet haunted his heretical successor. He left me an old chair, but bed, and even chamber articles, I was forced to purchase at Malta.

"That which we call the currant in England, is a grape. I shall send a barrel home, to make the poor at Cardington a Christmas pudding.

"My friend, I am afraid, thinks me a rash adventurer on account of my French expedition; but courage and conduct accomplish many things. Perhaps I should not tell him I am going on my present expedition with but little money in my pocket and no credit; yet I persuade myself that I shall not want. Should I draw on you I doubt not you will pay my drafts;[1] but I spend little

[1] Mr. Whitbread was always ready to act as Howard's banker, and on more than one occasion Howard was in-

money. The medical line, during the contagion, live very low. Everything here is very cheap, meat 2d. a pound. Supplies are from Turkey; the Continent is about eight or ten miles off. The Greeks are fine figures, but the young women never appear till they are married. Please to inform my son, and any person you think proper, I am well. I will write to him from my next encampment. With affectionate compliments to Harriet, Lady St. John, and my worthy young friend Samuel.—I am, most sincerely yours,

"J. HOWARD.

"S. WHITBREAD, Esq., M.P."

At Zante a passage was secured in a miserable Turkish boat, but Howard was lucky in doing the voyage in six days and a half.[1] He spent some time at Smyrna, examining the prisons and hospitals there; after which he sailed to Constantinople, intending to travel from thence overland to Venice. His determination, however, to see and experience everything for himself led to a change of plans, which is thus described in the work on Lazarettos.

"On further consideration I determined to seek an opportunity of performing quarantine *myself*; and with this view to submit to the inconveniences of a sea voyage to Venice, the

debted to him for advances, to enable him to meet the very heavy expenses in which his labours involved him.

[1] Aikin's *View, etc.*, p. 132.

place where lazarettos were *first* established. And, in order to obtain the best information by performing the strictest quarantine, I further determined to return to Smyrna, there to take my passage in a ship with a *foul* bill." [1]

The voyage thus courageously undertaken was an unusually long one. The vessel was detained by contrary winds; nor was the risk of catching the plague the only danger to which Howard was exposed, for the ship was attacked by a Tunisian privateer with whom they had a "smart skirmish."

"In this skirmish one of our cannon, charged with spike-nails, having accidentally done great execution, the privateer immediately, to our great joy, hoisted its sails and made off." [2]

The cannon which did such execution was, according to Aikin,[3] pointed by Howard himself; and he afterwards learnt that the captain, holding that if they were taken the only alternatives before them would be death or perpetual slavery, had determined to blow up the ship rather than surrender.

Arrived at Venice, Howard made trial of quarantine to his heart's content. He was placed with his baggage in a boat fastened by a cord ten feet long to another boat in which were six rowers. As they neared the shore,

[1] *Lazarettos*, p. 10. [2] *Ib.* p. 22.
[3] Aikin's *View, etc.*, p. 134.

the cord was loosed, and his boat was pushed in by a long pole to the shore. Here he was met by the official, who conducted him to the "new lazaretto," where he was to undergo his quarantine. He describes it as "a very dirty room full of vermin, and without table, chair, or bed." His representations of the offensiveness of the place secured his removal a few days later to the "old lazaretto," where his hopes to be more comfortable were disappointed, for the apartment appointed for him was "no less disagreeable and offensive than the last." A third lodging was, however, more comfortable, and, by the help of a little whitewash, was rendered "so sweet and fresh" that Howard soon recovered his health, which had suffered considerably from the insanitary character of the quarters first assigned to him. His judgment on the various regulations for performing quarantine was that they were "wise and good," but that there was "such remissness and corruption in executing these regulations, as to render the quarantine almost useless, and little more than an establishment for providing for officers and infirm people." [1]

At Venice Howard received a budget of letters from England, and was much disturbed and distressed by two pieces of news which here reached him.

[1] *Lazarettos*, p. 22.

The former of these was a design, which had been started by some well-meaning but indiscreet admirers of his, of erecting a statue in his honour. The plan was first suggested in the columns of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, by a person who could claim only the slightest acquaintance with Howard. It was eagerly taken up, and for some months the columns of the same periodical were filled with suggestions of all kinds for the memorial. Nothing could possibly have been more distasteful to Howard himself. His own friends were well aware of it, and most of them would have nothing to say to the design. He had always shrunk from publicity, and detested anything approaching to display. When, therefore, he was informed, by letters from home, of the proposal thus to honour him, he was horrified, and at once wrote to his friends to express his distress, and to beg them to use all their influence to stop the scheme; following this up a little later by a letter sent to the promoters from Vienna, where he was in December, urgently requesting that the design might definitely be abandoned.

"GENTLEMEN,—I shall ever think it an honour to have my weak endeavours approved by so many respectable persons, who devote their time, and have so generously subscribed, towards a fund for relieving prisoners and reforming prisons.—But to the erecting a monument, permit me, in the most

fixed and unequivocal manner, to declare my repugnancy to it, and that the execution of it will be a *punishment* to me. It is, therefore, gentlemen, my particular and earnest request, that it may *for ever* be laid aside.—With great respect, I am, Gentlemen, your most obedient servant,

"JOHN HOWARD.

"VIENNA, *Dec.* 15, 1786."

Even this proved ineffectual, and so, when he returned to England early in the following year, the first thing he did was to write again to the promoters and subscribers, entirely declining to have anything to do with the proposed memorial, or to permit his name to be in any way associated with it.

To the Subscribers for erecting a Statue, etc., to Mr Howard.

"MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—You are entitled to all the gratitude I can express for the testimony of approbation you have intended me, and I am truly sensible of the honour done me; but, at the same time, you must permit me to inform you that I cannot, without violating all my feelings, consent to it, and that the execution of your design will be a cruel punishment to me. It is, therefore, my earnest request, that those friends who wish my happiness and future comfort in life would withdraw their names from the subscription, and that the execution of your design may be laid aside for ever.

"I shall always think the reform now going on in several of the gaols of this kingdom, and which I hope will become general, the greatest honour and the most ample reward I can possibly receive.

"I must further inform you that I cannot permit the fund, which in my absence and without my consent, has been called the Howardian Fund, to go in future by that name; and that I will have no concern in the disposal of the money subscribed; my situation and various pursuits rendering it impossible for me to pay any attention to such a general plan, which can only be carried into due effect in particular districts by a constant attention and a constant residence.—I am, my Lords and Gentlemen, your obedient and faithful humble servant,

"JOHN HOWARD.

"LONDON, *Feb.* 16, 1787."

This was conclusive, and the scheme was dropped. Some persons received their subscriptions back, a sum of £200 was apportioned to the relief of prisoners, and the remainder of the money collected was invested, and employed, after Howard's death, in the erection of a monument in St. Paul's Cathedral and the striking of a medal in his memory.

The other matter of which Howard received intelligence at Venice was of a more serious nature. The proposal for a statue was an annoyance, and nothing more. But the accounts which he now received of his son's behaviour

were such as to cause him the gravest anxiety and most acute suffering. The boy had been carefully educated. At one time Howard had intended to send him to Eton, but the accounts which he received of the absence of religious training there decided him against it; and young Howard was placed under the care of a tutor in the Midlands. At the age of eighteen he was sent to Edinburgh University, where he was placed under the care of Dr. Blacklock. Here, apparently, for the first time his conduct was such as to cause his father serious uneasiness, and he was presently removed. In 1784 he was entered as a Fellow Commoner at St. John's College, Cambridge; and it was while he was there that his behaviour became so strange as to leave no doubt that it was due to insanity. Howard had always done his best to see what he could of him in the holidays, and certainly on one occasion had taken him with him on a visit to Ireland. But, all through his life, the boy must have been left far too much to the care of tutors and servants. One who had more to do with him than almost anyone else was Howard's confidential servant, Thomasson. Unfortunately his master's confidence in this man was entirely misplaced, and there seems to be no doubt that he encouraged young Howard in a course of dissolute conduct, which, it is thought, may have con-

tributed largely to the malady to which he now fell a victim.

It was at Venice that the first news of the unhappy lad's strange conduct at Cardington, during his Cambridge vacations, reached his father, at the same time that he received the earliest intimation of the design of erecting a statue in his honour. His letters, written during his quarantine, are full of these subjects, and show the intense agitation which they caused him. Writing to Thomasson, in whom he still had unbounded confidence, after describing his adventure with the privateer, and speaking of his condition "in an infectious lazaretto," he says that through all his trials his steady spirits never forsook him, "till yesterday, on the receipt of my letters, the accumulated misfortunes almost sink me." To John Prole, his faithful bailiff, he writes more at length:

"It is with great concern I hear the account of my son's behaviour. I fear he gives you, as well as others, a great deal of trouble. A great loss to children is their mother; for they check and form their minds, curbing the corrupt passions of pride and self-will, which is seen very early in children. I must leave it to Him with whom are all hearts; and sigh in secret, trusting that the blessing of such an excellent mother is laid up for him. As to another affair, it distresses my mind. Whoever

set it afoot, I know not; but sure I am, they were totally unacquainted with my temper and disposition. I once before, on an application to sit for my picture to be placed in public, hesitated not a moment, in showing my aversion to it. And, as I knew I was going on a dangerous expedition, Thomas will remember about the last words I said to him: 'If I die abroad, do not let me be moved; let there be only a plain slip of marble placed under that of my wife's, Henrietta, with this inscription:— "John Howard died —— aged ——. My hope is in Christ."' This I said that Mr. Leeds and my son might know that my mind was fixed and still unaltered. I have set many engines to work to check the flames, for I bless God I know myself too well to be pleased with such praises; when, alas! we have nothing of our own but folly and sin."

Subsequent letters from England brought fuller details of an even more distressing character. Howard was anxious to return home as fast as possible, but his health had suffered so seriously that he was unable to make a rapid journey. Writing from Vienna, where he was compelled to stop and rest for some time, to Mr. Smith, he explains the delay in his movements, and pours out his heart to his old friend on his son's unhappy condition.

John Howard to the Rev. T. Smith.

"VIENNA, *December* 17, 1786.

"MY GOOD FRIEND,—I acknowledge it is too long since I last wrote to you. Various occurrences, as a traveller in an unfrequented path, have happened to me—"perils by land, perils by water." After a long and dangerous voyage, the immediate confinement in one of the most offensive lazarettos, without chair, table, or a board to lay my bed on, with the dreadful accounts I received of my son, almost broke my steady spirits. The ill-judged zeal of some persons in another affair vexed me not a little; but in this my mind was fixed—a statue I detest; I should have carefully avoided the sight of it; it would indeed have been a punishment to me; and as I have last post wrote to the Committee, in the most plain and unequivocal manner, I am persuaded that the affair is at an end. The money will be far better employed in the Fund for Relieving Prisoners and Reforming Prisons. My son's conduct is a bitter affliction to me; the loss of his mother, and such a mother, to check and guide the infant passions; the uninterrupted health and strength he enjoyed was productive of many an anxious thought, yet I hoped the best. By my accounts he has lost his senses; if so, calm restraint and confinement, with proper medical assistance, is necessary. I have wrote last post to Mr. Tatnall, with my free consent and full acquiescence in whatever steps he and his uncles may think proper to take; as I can form no proper judgment at this distance; and my presence or commands would have little weight

with him, and still less, if distracted. Yet I shall hasten home as fast as possible; but as my apartment at the lazaretto was as offensive as a sick-ward is at night (the Venetians being very dirty), the walls probably not washed these fifty years, I soon lost all stomach to my bread and tea, and was listless, as I have known several persons in similar circumstances by their confinement in our gaols. I talked of lime-whiting my room, but I soon found the prejudices the Venetians had against it; so I privately procured a quarter of a bushel of lime, and a few days after proper brushes. Early one morning, three hours before my guard was up, I began with my valet who was sent to light my fires (having determined to lock up my guard, if he opposed me), and slacking the fresh lime at different times, always with *boiling* water (my brick walls and ceiling being before brushed down), we washed every part of my room, and afterwards the floor, with boiling water, and finished our job by noon, so that at four o'clock I drank my tea, and at night lay in a sweet and fresh room; and in a few days my appetite and strength returned. I had before tried the washing the walls with boiling water, but it had no effect on the infectious walls, etc.

"I stayed a week after I left the lazaretto, at Venice, and in three days came by sea to Trieste; I found at the former, and at this place, the slow hospital fever creeping upon me, by my long confinement, the whole air of the lazaretto being infected. Mr. Murray, our last ambassador from Constantinople, died there of the putrid fever. But the sub-governor of Trieste spared me his easy and good carriage, and I came here last

Tuesday, in four nights and five days; three of the former I travelled, but one night I was forced to stop; I am much reduced by fatigue of body and mind; I have great reason to bless God that my steadiness of resolution does not forsake me in so many solitary hours. If my night fever keeps off, I will soon go the long stride to Amsterdam. Pray let me there receive a letter from you (at Messrs. Hopes, bankers); give me your advice, fully and freely. Is my son distracted? Is it from the probability of his vice and folly at Edinburgh? How could Mr.—— receive him to the sacrament? What do you advise? My old servants, John Prole, Thomas, and Jos. Crockford, have had a sad time. I hear they have been faithful, wise, and prudent. Please to thank them particularly, in my name, for their conduct; two of them I am persuaded have acted out of regard to his excellent mother, who I rejoice is *dead*.—Remember me to our connected friends at Bedford.—I am, with all good wishes, ever yours,

"JOHN HOWARD.

"*P.S.*—Excuse writing, etc., as wrote early by a poor lamp. What I suffered I am persuaded I should have disregarded on the lazaretto, as I gained useful information. The regulations are admirable, if they were better kept. Venice is the mother of all lazarettos, but, O! my son, my son.

"*P.S.*—The post not going out till this evening, the 19th, I just add, that I had a poor night; much of my fever, though quite off now, six o'clock; yet must stop two or three days longer.

The mountain air, I hope, will take it off, and I shall get on by the light nights. I only want a month's rest, for indeed nobody knows what I have suffered this journey; many weeks dry biscuits and tea; often have I wished for a little of my skimmed milk. Yet I bless God for many comfortable Sabbaths, and my mind steadily approving the object I had in pursuit. Adieu, adieu.

"To Rev. Mr. Smith, Potter Street,
Bedford (Angleterre)."

During his stay at Vienna Howard was honoured by an interview with the Emperor, Joseph II., of which he gives a full account in his diary, which is worth transcribing.

"Xmas Day, 1786, Vienna.—I this day had the honour of near two hours conversation in private with the Emperor: his very condescending and affable manner gave me that freedom of speech which enabled me plainly and freely to tell him my mind. His Majesty began on his Military Hospital, then the Great Hospital, also the Lunatic Asylum, the defects of which I told him. On *prisons* I fully opened my mind: it pleased God to give me full recollection, and freedom of speech. His Majesty stopped me, and said, '*You hang in your country.*' I said '*Yes,* but death was more desirable than the misery such wretches endure—in total darkness, chained to the wall—no visitor, no priest, even for two years together; it

was a punishment too great for human nature to bear; many had lost their rational faculties by it.' His Majesty asked me the condition our prisons were in at London. I said 'they were bad, but in a way of improvement; but that all Europe had their eye on His Majesty, who had made such alterations in his hospitals and prisons.' I said 'the object was to make them *better* men, and *useful* subjects.' The Emperor shaked me by the hand, and said I had given him much pleasure. The Emperor freely and openly conversed with me. I admire his condescension and affability, his thirst and desire to do good, and to strike out great objects. He was not a month on the throne before he saw every prison and hospital; now he continually and unexpectedly looks into all his establishments. I have seen him go out in his chariot with only one footman —no guards, no attendants; sometimes drives himself with only his coachman behind; looks into everything, knows everything—I think means well. The Emperor told his Minister he was greatly pleased with my visit; I had not pleaded for the prisoners with soft and flattering speech that meant nothing: some things I advised he *should* do, others he should *not* do."

To the same occasion belongs another rather comical incident. The governor of Upper Austria, in the course of a visit to Howard, made some

inquiry as to the state of the prisons in the province to the government of which he had been appointed. "The worst in all Germany," was the answer, "particularly in the condition of the female prisoners; and I recommend your countess to visit them personally, as the best means of rectifying the abuses in their management." The lady, who had accompanied her husband, exclaimed indignantly at this, "*I* go into prisons!" and abruptly quitted the room, retiring downstairs with such rapidity that Howard feared she would meet with an accident. He was not, however, deterred from shouting after her as she fled: "Madam, remember that you are a woman yourself, and must soon, like the most miserable female prisoner in a dungeon, inhabit but a small space of that earth from which you equally originated."

Shortly after this Howard was well enough to return to England. He reached London early in February 1787, only to find that his worst anticipations were realised, for his son had completely lost his reason, and had been brought by his uncles to Cardington where he was placed under proper control. It seemed best to leave him there for a time, as all hope of a recovery was not abandoned. Howard naturally felt that, under these circumstances, Cardington was no place for him; and therefore it is no wonder that in a

very short time he was off on his travels again. In March he began a *fifth* inspection of English gaols, which occupied him pretty constantly throughout the remainder of this year and the greater part of the next, being only broken in upon by a visit to Scotland, and two to Ireland, where he made a more thorough and searching inquiry into the condition of the Protestant Charter Schools than he had previously been able to do. There were thirty-eight of these schools, which had been founded in the interests of Protestantism, and, strong Protestant as Howard was, he would naturally have been disposed to regard them with favour. He was, however, thoroughly disgusted with the disgraceful way in which they were managed, and in his rounds saw enough of the evil of compulsory proselytism to lead him, when examined before a Committee of the Irish House of Commons, to make some strong remarks on the subject, and to express an earnest desire that free schools might be universally established "for children *of all persuasions*," and that "the Protestant cause" might be less regarded in bestowing the advantage of education upon the poor.[1]

It was in Dublin, during one of these visits to Ireland, that Howard was introduced to John Wesley (on June 21, 1787), who has left in his

[1] *Lazarettos*, p. 119.

diary a brief notice of the interview. "I had the pleasure of a conversation with Mr. Howard, I think one of the greatest men in Europe. Nothing but the mighty power of God can enable him to go through his difficult and dangerous employment."[1] Howard was equally pleased with Wesley, and, speaking afterwards of the interview to Alexander Knox, told him how he had been encouraged to go on vigorously with his designs. "I saw in him how much a single man might achieve by zeal and perseverance, and I thought, Why may I not do as much in my way as Mr. Wesley has done in his, if I am only as assiduous and persevering? And I determined I would pursue my work with more alacrity than ever." Two years later, Howard called on Wesley in London to present him with a copy of his book on Lazarettos, but Wesley was then in Ireland, and Howard had to content himself with leaving the following message for him :—"Present my respects and love to Mr. Wesley, tell him I had hoped to see him once more—perhaps we may meet again in this world, but, if not, we shall meet, I trust, in a better." So far as is known the two men never saw each other again, but about this time Wesley wrote to his brother Charles (June 20, 1789) his opinion of Howard: "Mr. Howard is really an

[1] See Tyerman's *Life and Times of John Wesley*. vol. iii. pp. 495, 581.

extraordinary man; God has raised him up to be a blessing to many nations. I do not doubt but there has been something more than natural in his preservation hitherto, and should not wonder if the providence of God should hereafter be still more conspicuous in his favour."

These tours ended, Howard was ready to publish the results of his last four years' work; and for this purpose retired once more to Warrington, to superintend the printing of his new book, and to consult over it with Dr. Aikin. Some time was spent here in the autumn of 1788, and early in the following year the volume was ready for publication. It is, as its title indicates, a miscellaneous work: *An Account of the Principal Lazarettos in Europe: with various papers relative to the Plague; together with further observations on some foreign prisons and hospitals, and additional remarks on the present state of those in Great Britain and Ireland.* Even this does not exhaust the list of subjects treated of, for a section of some length is added on the Charter Schools of Ireland. The portion of the work which treats of lazarettos and the plague is of course concerned with a subject which was entirely novel, but the remainder of the volume may be regarded as an appendix to the previous work, bringing his inquiry into the condition of our prisons up to date. He was able to note with satisfaction the good

results which had been obtained by the Act for Preserving the Health of Prisoners, and speaks warmly of "the liberal and humane spirit which engages the public to alleviate the sufferings of prisoners in general, and, particularly, to release many industrious though unfortunate debtors. But at this point," he was compelled to add, "the spirit of improvement *unhappily* seems to stop, scarcely touching upon that still more *important* object, the *reformation of morals* in our prisons; yet it is obvious that, if this be neglected, besides the evil consequences that must result from such a source of wickedness, a suspicion will arise, that what has been already done has proceeded, *chiefly*, from the selfish motive of avoiding the danger *to our own health*, in attending courts of judicature.

"In this *further reformation*, it will be absolutely necessary to begin with the *capital*; for as, in my former visits, when I have met with the gaol fever in country prisons, I have been almost *constantly* told, that it was derived from those in *London*; so the corruption of *manners* also, flowing from that *great fountain*, spreads far and wide its malignant streams. In what prison in *London* is there a proper separation of criminals, the old from the young, convicts from the untried? Where are the night-rooms for solitary confinement and reflection? Where is any proper attention paid to sick and

dying prisoners? Where are the rules and orders of magistrates for the direction of gaolers, and the government of prisoners? In what gaol are not the ears shocked with the *profaneness* both of prisoners and turnkeys? Where is any regard paid to the *Lord's day*? Where is not the afternoon of that day a time of greater concourse of visitants than any other? And, though the gaoler's taps are abolished, yet are not publicans *continually* waiting to serve the prisoners and their company? Is not beer *now* sold by the debtors? And do not turnkeys keep *shops* in the gaols?"[1]

This paragraph, which contains Howard's last remarks on the subject, forms a terrible indictment of the system still acquiesced in throughout the country, even after sixteen years of persistent labour on his part; while the fact that every one of the reforms which he indicates as desirable has since been effected, with the happiest results, is the best testimony to the clearness with which he had grasped the principles on which alone a satisfactory system of prison discipline can be properly carried out.

[1] *Lazarettos*, p. 233.

CHAPTER IX

HOWARD'S LAST JOURNEY AND DEATH

Howard starts on his Last Journey—Its Object—Letters from Moscow—Letters from Cherson—Visits to Military Hospitals—Illness—Visit from Admiral Priestman—Death—Funeral—Monument at Cherson—Statue in St. Paul's Cathedral.

IT might well have seemed to Howard that with the publication of the volume on Lazarettos his work was ended. There was no longer any reason why he should not once more reside at Cardington, as his unfortunate son had by this time become so hopelessly insane that it had been found necessary to remove him to a private asylum at Leicester, where he remained till his death in 1799, at the age of thirty-four. The house was thus once more free, had Howard been disposed to settle down in it to that "comfortable, useful, and honourable life," which had once been his aim.[1] But his ideal had greatly changed since then. He now felt that "a retirement to ease

[1] Cf. p. 26.

would be cowardly, sinful, and base." [1] There can be little doubt that his domestic sorrows, with which Cardington was so closely associated, made the thought of residence there distasteful to him. Besides this, habit had become second nature to him. He had lived the life of a wanderer for so long, and had spent so many years upon those researches of which he spoke slightingly as his "hobby," that it would have been unnatural to him to abandon them and settle down to a quiet life in the country. He felt that his time was short, and that there was still much to be done in the line which he had marked out for himself. He was consumed with the earnest desire to "give some check to far greater ravages than any occasioned by the destructive weapons of war." [2] Writing to Mr. Whitbread as early as May 12, 1788, he announced his intention of taking "a far more extensive journey" than any that he had yet made; and at the close of his book on Lazarettos he disclosed his purpose more fully.

"To my country I commit the result of my past labours. It is my intention *again* to quit it for the purpose of revisiting *Russia, Turkey,* and some other countries, and extending my tour in the East. I am not insensible of the dangers that must attend such a journey. Trusting, however, in the protection of that *kind Providence* which

[1] Field's *Correspondence of John Howard*, p. 147. [2] *Ib.*

has hitherto preserved me, I *calmly* and *cheerfully* commit myself to the disposal of unerring wisdom. Should it please God to cut off my life in the prosecution of this design, let not my conduct be *uncandidly* imputed to *rashness* or *enthusiasm*, but to a *serious, deliberate* conviction that I am pursuing the path of *duty*; and to a sincere desire of being made an instrument of more extensive usefulness to my fellow-creatures than could be expected in the narrower circle of a retired life." [1]

Some doubt has been expressed as to the exact object with which this tour in the East was to be made. Dr. Aikin had several conversations with Howard on the subject, which left on his mind the impression that he was influenced by a "wish to have objects of inquiry pointed out to him" rather than by "any specific views present to his own mind." [2] Much of the ground over which he proposed to travel was new to him, for the plan of his travels included Asiatic Turkey, Egypt, and the coast of Barbary. Here he was sure to find much to interest him. But, besides such more general objects, it is clear that he had a specific one. He realised that the mystery of the plague was not yet solved, and was anxious to investigate it still further, and obtain on the spot all possible information as to the nature and causes of the disease, the way in which it spread, the best

[1] *Lazarettos*, p. 235. [2] Aikin's *View, etc.*, p. 184.

method of treatment, and the means for its cure and prevention.[1] He was well aware of the risks that he ran, and never expected to live to return to England. He, therefore, spent some time at Cardington, with his usual thoughtfulness and precision setting his affairs in the most perfect order; and made a round of farewell visits to many of his friends, whom he never expected to see again upon earth. "We shall soon meet in heaven," he said to one of them on parting, and added, "The way to heaven from Grand Cairo is as near as from London."

It was early in July that he set forth, taking with him his servant Thomasson, who had accompanied him on many of his previous journeys, and who cannot have lost his confidence. His route lay through Holland and Germany to Russia, where, after a visit to St. Petersburg, some time was spent in Moscow. From this city he wrote an account of his movements and plans to his friend, Dr. Price.

John Howard to Dr. Price.

"Moscow, *September* 22, 1789.

"My Dear Friend.—Your kind desire of hearing from me engages me to write. When I left Eng-

[1] See Brown's *Life*, p. 564, and cf. Field's *Correspondence of John Howard*, p. 163. "I hope to investigate and ascertain with precision the cause of the plague." Letter to Mr. Whitbread, August 16, 1789.

land, I first stopped at Amsterdam. I proceeded to Osnaburg, Hanover, Brunswick, and Berlin: then to Koningsbergh, Riga, and Petersburgh, at all which places I visited the prisons and hospitals, which were all flung open to me, and in some the burgomasters accompanied me into the dungeons, as well as into the other rooms of confinement.

"I arrived a few days ago in this city, and have begun my rounds. The hospitals are in a sad state; upwards of seventy thousand sailors and recruits died in them last year. I labour to convey the torch of philanthropy into these distant regions, as in God's hand no instrument is weak, and in whose presence no flesh must glory.

"I go through Poland into Hungary. I hope to have a few nights of this moon in my journey to Warsaw, which is about a thousand miles. I am pure well; the weather clear; the mornings fresh; thermometer 48°, but have not yet begun fires. I wish for a mild winter, and shall then make some progress in my European expedition.

"My medical acquaintance give me but little hopes of escaping the plague in Turkey, but my spirits do not at all fail me; and, indeed, I do not look back, but would readily endure any hardships, and encounter any dangers, to be an honour to my Christian profession.

"I long to hear from my friend, yet I know not where he can direct to me, unless at Sir Robert Ainslie's, Constantinople. I will hope all things. Remember me to sisters, nieces, and Mr. Morgan. I am, my much esteemed friend, most affectionately and sincerely yours, JOHN HOWARD.

"Rev. Dr. PRICE."

Shortly after this letter was written his plans underwent a change. Russia and Turkey were at this time at war; and the condition of the military hospitals was exactly the kind of subject in which Howard would take the keenest interest. Reports had reached him of the wretched state of the sick and wounded soldiers of the Russian army; and accordingly he determined to proceed to the seat of war, in the hope that he might "do some good," and "fairly try" his favourite remedy, in which he believed intensely, "the powders of Dr. James." [1] He hoped also to find at Sebastopol or elsewhere some neutral ship which might carry him to Constantinople and so enable him to reach Turkey. His adventures on the journey from Moscow to Cherson (a port on the Dnieper in what was then known as Russian Tartary) are described in a letter to Mr. Whitbread, to which a special interest attaches, as it is his last extant letter.

[1] Field's *Correspondence of John Howard*, p. 171. Readers of Boswell's *Life of Johnson* will remember the various allusions to Dr. James (Johnson's "poor Jamey") in that immortal work. He was an old schoolfellow of Johnson's, who helped him in his *Medicinal Dictionary* "writing the proposals for the dictionary and also a little in the dictionary itself." Howard, however, believed in the efficacy of his medicines a good deal more than did the illustrious doctor, who writes of them thus: "I never thought well of Dr. James's compounded medicines; his ingredients appear to me sometimes inefficacious and trifling, and sometimes heterogeneous and destructive of each other."

John Howard to Samuel Whitbread, Esq., M.P.

"CHERSON, in TARTARY, *Nov.* 14*th*, 1789.

"DEAR SIR,—I wrote to you on my arrival at Moscow, on the first, and, permit me to say, constant impression of your kindness. I also wrote to you about a fortnight after, informing you of my intention to visit the army and navy hospitals towards the Black Sea. I was somewhat sensible of the dangers I had to encounter and the hardships I had to endure in a journey 1300 or 1400 miles, with only my servant. I went on pretty well till on the borders of Tartary, when, as I depended on my patent chain, my great trunk and hat-box were cut off from behind my chaise. It was midnight, and both of us, having travelled four nights, were fast asleep. However, we soon discovered it, and, having recovered the shock, I went back directly to the suspected house, and ran in among ten or twelve of the banditti. At break of day I had some secured, and search made. My hat-box was found, but my great trunk I almost despaired of, though I stayed before the door in my chaise two days. Providentially, the fourth day it was found by a peasant. The brass nails glistened in a part where the oilskin was worn. His oxen would not go on; he beat them, but they would not go on; he then saw something, but durst not approach till another peasant came up, when, after signing themselves with the cross, they went up to it, and carried it directly to the

magistrate of the village. He sent after me to a town about eighty miles off, where I was to stay two or three days, and I returned. I found by my inventory that not a single handkerchief was lost, and they missed about a hundred guineas in a paper, in the middle of the trunk. My return stunned them. All would have been moved off before light. I have broken up the band; four will go into ——. I am well. My clothes and bedding I think warmer since I got them out of the fire. I saw some other travellers who were robbed, and had lost their money and goods on the road.

"Thomas showed me his marketing. A quarter of lamb, that he said would cost 5s., he had paid 7½d. for. My marketing is a good melon for 1¼d., which supplies my English luxury of currants with my bread and tea. I have visited the hospital here, in which there are about eight hundred sick recruits. I have this week been about forty miles, for between ——, a deserted town, and Otschakow, lies the army hospital. There I stayed two or three days, as I found about 2000 sick and wounded. They are dreadfully neglected. A heart of stone would almost bleed! I am a spy, a sad spy on them, and they all fear me. The abuses of office are glaring, and I want not courage to tell them so.

"I have just received your kind letter from Warsaw. I read it over and over again with fresh pleasure. I exult in the happiness and prosperity of your house, and that my young friend likes Cardington.

"I shall be moving for the navy hospital, at

Sebastopol, in the south of the Crimea, about the end of the year; and I hope by some means to be at Constantinople the beginning of March.

"The wild Cossacks who live underground in the Crimea must look sharp if they rob me, as I will not go to sleep any night on the road, and I am well armed. I am persuaded no hurry or fear will be on my mind. My journey, I still think, will engage me for three years; and, as I have a year's work in England, I think little of Cardington.

"The land for several hundred miles is the finest garden mould, not a stone mixed with it, nor a single tree, nor any inhabitants. A person may have any quantity for ten years, and after that by paying the Empress fifteen roubles (about $1\frac{3}{4}$ guineas a year). Fine hay-stacks a person showed me; two-thirds he took, and one-third he gave the Empress, but no rent. He said he had bought fine meat for less than $\frac{1}{2}$d. a pound before the army came into this country.

"I shall, I understand, take possession of some poor Turk's deserted house in the Crimea for two months. As I am well informed, there were double the number of inhabitants in the capital than there now are in all that fine country. The cruelty of the Russians forced 100,000 to quit their country. Great things are expected on the great St. Nicholas's Day next month. He is the patron saint of this country, who assisted them in destroying 4000 or 5000 men, women, and children at Otschakow last year, on his day. But as our trades are different

I wish to have no further acquaintance with that saint. Ever wishing to be with my affectionate friend,

"JOHN HOWARD.

"SAMUEL WHITBREAD, Esq., M.P."

Cherson was reached about the middle of November; and here as well as at Witowka and St. Nicholas, places at no great distance off, Howard had ample opportunities of inquiring into the condition of the military hospitals. "Hospital scandals" did not attract the same attention in those days as they do now, and all that Howard saw were about as bad as they could possibly be. Of Cherson he writes: "Bedsteads, beds, and coverlets very dirty; wards and passages never washed, nor beds changed when patients die, and the sick were very dirty in their persons and linen; the rooms close and offensive; all disorders mingled together, except those with the itch and last stage of the flux. The attendants are men sent from the regiments on account of their being useless from stupidity or drunkenness; . . . the prevalent diseases are scurvy and intermittent fever. These disorders, from the closeness and dirtiness of the wards, scanty linen and bedding, improper diet and bad attendance, soon turn to a putrid fever with flux, which carries off the patients in a few days; . . . the primary objects

in all hospitals, seem here neglected, *viz.*, *cleanliness, air, diet, separation,* and *attention.* These are such essentials, that humanity and good policy equally demand that no expence should be spared to procure them. Care in this respect, I am persuaded, would save many more lives than the parade of medicines in the adjoining apothecary's shop." [1]

At St. Nicholas he tells us he found "fifty such objects of wretchedness" as he had never before seen together. "Most or all of them were recruits in the prime of life; many dying laid on hard coarse reeds—no linen, no coverlets; only a few remnants of their old clothes to cover them; their persons dirty beyond description; their shirts in rags. I turned to the officers, and requested them to look on their fellow-creatures, who were thus inhumanly treated, adding that in none of the countries I had ever visited, had I found so little attention paid to the military as in *Russia.* I knew what I said would have no other effect on them but to make them despise me, but I should assuredly relate what I had with so much concern and indignation beheld." [2]

His constant visits and suggestions were not entirely without result, as on the occasion of his last visit to the military hospital at Cherson

[1] *Lazarettos*, appendix, p. 18. [2] *Ib.* p. 20.

he notes: "On January 6, I went the round of all the wards of the military hospital and sickrooms of the regiment quartered here. As to the former, I found a great alteration with respect to cleanliness, in the persons, linen, and bedding of the sick. In the latter, some small alteration for the better in that particular, but not so general as in the military hospital." [1]

This passage, which occurs in the very last entry made in his note-book, refers to January 6, 1790. Even then the germs of the fever from which he died must have been in him. The circumstances of his illness and death were in the first instance communicated to Dr. Aikin by Thomasson, who was with him to the last; and further details were obtained on the spot a few years later from Admiral Mordvinoff, chief Admiral of the Black Sea Fleet, and Admiral Priestman, an English officer in the Russian service, by Dr. Clarke the traveller, and given to the world in his *Travels in Various Countries.*" [2]

Towards the close of 1789 the town of Cherson had been filled with officers from the Russian army, to whom leave of absence had been freely given after the taking of the fortress of Bender from the Turks. The cessation of hostilities was

[1] *Lazarettos*, appendix, p. 20.

[2] *Travels in Various Countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa*, by Edward Daniel Clarke, LL.D. See vol. i. p. 604 *seq.*

made the occasion of much gaiety, and several balls and masquerades were held, shortly after which many of the gentry of the neighbourhood were attacked by a fever, which, in Howard's opinion, had been brought by the officers from Bender. Among the number was a young lady, who was living some miles from Cherson. Howard's reputation as a physician caused an urgent request to be sent to him to visit her. At first he declined, on the ground that he only gave such assistance as he could to the poor; but, on being much pressed, he consented, and paid her one or two visits in the latter part of December. He then returned to Cherson, where some little time later he received a letter begging him to pay her another visit. The letter had been by some accident considerably delayed, and, much vexed at this, Howard insisted on setting off at once in spite of the cold, and drenching rain. No carriage could be obtained, and he had to content himself with an old dray horse, mounted on which he was exposed to the full fury of the storm. There can be little doubt that he caught a chill on the journey, though he himself was under the impression that he took the fever from the patient, who to his great distress died the following day. Howard at once returned to Cherson, and a few days later (on January 8, 1790) went out to dine with Admiral Mordvinoff. He stayed later than

usual, and on his return home complained of feeling unwell, saying that he "thought he had something of the gout flying about him."[1] He dosed himself regularly, and after a feverish attack had recourse to Dr. James's powders, which he took for some days, for though Prince Potemkin, who was in command of the Russian forces, sent his own physician to attend him, his own prescriptions were never interfered with.[2] On the 12th and again on the 17th of January he was seized with fits of an alarming character, after which he rapidly grew worse. It was on one of these days that he received a visit from his friend, Admiral Priestman, whom until this illness he had been accustomed to visit every day, "when, with his usual attention to regularity, he would place his watch on the

[1] He had already suffered from this in the course of his journey, as, writing to Mr. Whitbread early in September, he had said, "I am pretty well. The gout at times gives me mementos, but my abstemious course and water probably kept me on my legs—for what time? I bless God I have no anxiety about that" (Field's *Correspondence, etc.*, p. 169).

[2] Dr. Aikin thinks that this frequent use of James's powders must have been prejudicial; and suggests that Howard's name should be "added to the numerous lists of those whose lives have been sacrificed to the empirical use of a medicine of great activity, and therefore capable of doing much harm as well as good" (Aikin's *View, etc.*, p. 197). It may be remembered that much the same was said in the case of Oliver Goldsmith, whose end was thought to have been hastened by an injudicious use of the same remedy.

table, and pass exactly an hour with him in conversation." Priestman himself gave the account of what followed to Dr. Clarke, in 1800.[1] Finding that Howard failed to visit him, he went himself to see him, and found him weak and ill, sitting before a stove in his bedroom. In answer to an inquiry as to his health Howard replied that he felt his end was drawing near, that he had several things to say to his friend, and thanked him for having called. The admiral tried to cheer him by endeavouring to turn the conversation, but without success, for Howard rejoined: "Priestman, you style this a very dull conversation, and endeavour to direct my mind from dwelling upon death; but I entertain very different sentiments. Death has no terrors for me; it is an event I always look to with cheerfulness, if not with pleasure; and be assured it is to me more grateful than any other. I am well aware I have but a short time to live; my mode of life has rendered it impossible that I should get rid of this fever. If I had lived as you do, eating heartily of animal food, and drinking wine, I might, perhaps, by diminishing my diet, be able to subdue it. But how can such a man as I am lower his diet, who has been accustomed for years to exist on vegetables and water, a little bread, and a little tea? I have no method of lowering

[1] Clarke's *Travels, etc., loc. cit.*

my nourishment, and therefore I must die. It is such jolly fellows as you, Priestman, who get over these fevers." Directions as to his funeral were added. "There is a spot," said he, "near the village of Dauphigny, which would suit me nicely: you know it well, for I have often said I should like to be buried there; and let me beg of you, as you value your old friend, not to suffer any pomp to be used at my funeral; nor any monument or monumental inscription whatsoever to mark where I am laid; but lay me quietly in the earth, place a sun-dial over my grave, and let me be forgotten." Priestman went off, at his request, to make arrangements with the owner of the spot indicated; and shortly afterwards a letter was brought to Howard from England containing a greatly improved report of his son's condition. It was read to him by Thomasson, and, at the close, Howard turned his head towards him saying, "Is not this comfort for a dying father?" He also desired Thomasson, if ever by the blessing of God his son was restored, to tell him how much he had prayed for his happiness. He then gave further directions about his funeral, begging that he might not be interred with the rites of the Greek Church, but that Admiral Priestman would read the burial service of the Church of England over him. Hardly had he made this request before he was seized with a third attack,

which deprived him of the power of speech. It was now early on the morning of January 20. Admiral Mordvinoff had come in to see him, and found that the end was rapidly approaching. A physician was sent for, but came too late to be of any service; and, shortly after his arrival, Howard's spirit passed away.

He was buried in the spot which he had himself selected,[1] Admiral Priestman reading the English Burial Service, according to his desire; but such was the popular feeling aroused by his death that it was found impossible strictly to carry out his wishes with regard to the character of the funeral, "for the concourse of spectators was immense, and the order of his funeral was more magnificent than would have met with his approbation." The Prince of Moldavia was present "in a sumptuous carriage, drawn by six horses, covered with scarlet cloth." The admirals, generals, and staff officers of the garrison, the magistrates and merchants of Cherson, followed in their carriages, together with a large body of cavalry, and "an immense concourse of spectators on foot, amounting to two or three thousand."[2]

[1] The village was at that time apparently known as Dophinovka, from Mr. Dauphiné, its owner. It is now known as Stephanovka, and lies in the valley of Verofchina, six versts north of Cherson.

[2] Clarke's *Travels*, vol. i. p. 609.



Tomb of Howard

HOWARD'S TOMB.

From a sketch in Clarke's Travels

In another matter also Howard's wishes were disregarded. He had asked to have a sun-dial placed over his grave. For some reason that is not apparent this was not done, but in place of it there was erected by Admiral Mordvinoff "a small brick pyramid, white-washed, but without any inscription." [1] When Clarke and Heber saw it, it was already falling into ruin, and since then an endeavour has been made to carry out Howard's wishes, and its place is taken by a block of marble surmounted by a sun-dial,[2] bearing the following inscription in Latin and Russian:

JOHN HOWARD

Whoever thou art, thou standest at
the tomb of thy friend
1790

When the tidings of Howard's death reached the shores of England the feeling of sorrow was

[1] Heber's *Life*, vol. i. p. 277. Henderson visited it in 1821, and found the pyramid still there, with an inscription "Vixit propter alios" upon it (*Biblical Researches*, p. 284).

[2] In Mr. Scullard's lecture, *John Howard*, a photograph of the tomb as it now stands is given, as well as one of the monument raised to Howard's memory in Cherson itself, near the Church of the Assumption opposite the prison. This is an obelisk of grey stone, with a sundial on one face, and Howard's medallion in bronze on the other. In Clarke's *Travels*, vol. i. p. 573, will be found the representation of the original pyramid erected over the tomb, from a drawing by Heber which is reproduced here.

universal.[1] The fact was announced in the *Gazette* of March 23, a distinction which, it is said, was never before conferred on a private person; and the honour of a statue, which he had declined in his lifetime, was at once accorded to him. It was erected in St. Paul's Cathedral, and the following inscription, from the pen of his friend and kinsman, Mr. Whitbread, was placed upon it:

This extraordinary man had the Fortune to be
honoured whilst living,
In the manner which his Virtues deserved;
He received the thanks
Of both Houses of the British and Irish Parliaments,
For his eminent services rendered to his Country
and to Mankind.
Our National Prisons and Hospitals,
Improved upon the Suggestions of his Wisdom,
Bear testimony to the solidity of his Judgment,
And to the Estimation in which he was held
In every Part of the Civilised World,
Which he traversed to reduce the sum of
Human Misery;

[1] Thomasson on his return to England handed over Howard's papers, containing the notes of his last tour, to Dr. Aikin and Dr. Price, who were named as his literary executors. Dr. Price died very shortly afterwards, but the various memoranda which Howard had made were printed by Dr. Aikin exactly as he left them, as an appendix to the second edition of the work on Lazarettos, which was published in 1792.

From the Throne to the Dungeon his Name was mentioned
With Respect, Gratitude, and Admiration.
His Modesty alone
Defeated various efforts that were made during his life,
To erect this Statue,
Which the Publick has now consecrated to his Memory.
He was born at Hackney, in the County of Middlesex,
Sept. ii[d] MDCCXXVI.
The early Part of his Life he spent in Retirement,
Residing principally upon his paternal Estate,
At Cardington, in Bedfordshire;
For which County he served the Office of Sheriff in the
Year MDCCLXXIII.
He expired at Cherson in Russian Tartary, on
the xx[th] of Jan.
MDCCXC.
A Victim to the perilous and benevolent Attempt
To ascertain the Cause of, and find an efficacious Remedy
For the Plague.
He trod an open but unfrequented Path to Immortality,
In the ardent and unintermitted Exercise of
Christian Charity.
May this Tribute to his Fame
Excite an Emulation of his truly glorious Achievements.

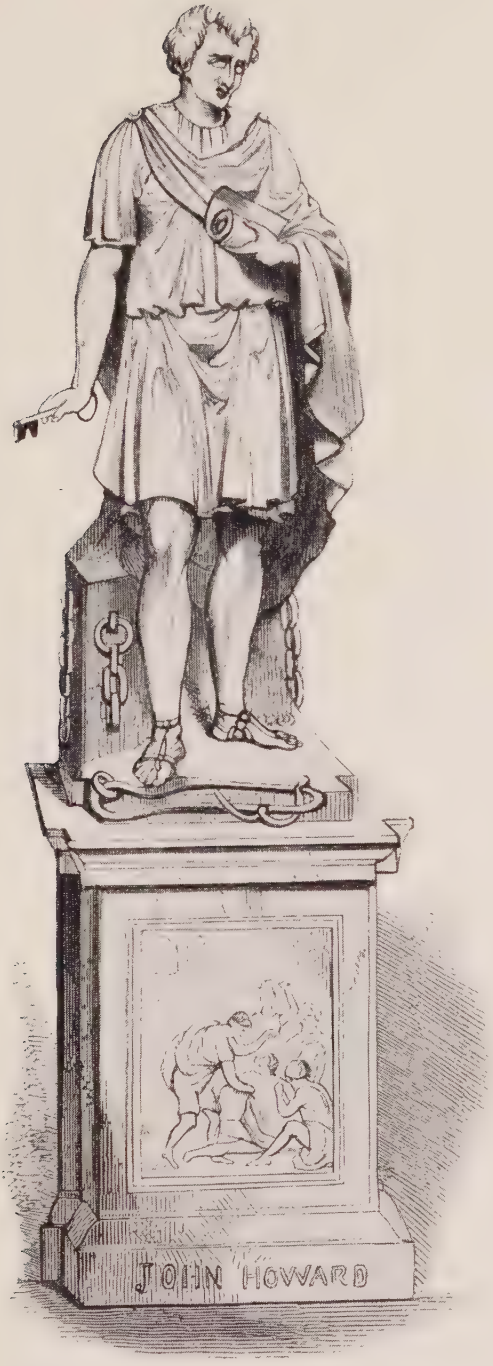
Up to this time no statues had been admitted into the Cathedral, and this was the first instance in which permission to erect one was accorded. Arrangements were made almost simultaneously for a statue of Dr. Johnson to be also placed there, but that of Howard was actually the first to be erected.[1] Thus, in the words of Dean

[1] The whole of the correspondence containing the negotiations between the Committee of the "Howardian Fund"

Milman, "The first statue admitted to St. Paul's was not that of statesman, warrior, or even of sovereign; it was that of John Howard, the pilgrim, not to gorgeous shrines of saints and martyrs, not even to holy lands, but to the loathsome depths and darkness of the prisons throughout what called itself the civilised world. Howard first exposed to the shuddering sight of mankind the horrible barbarities, the foul and abominable secrets of those dens of unmitigated suffering. By the exposure, he at least let some light and air into these earthly hells. Perhaps no man has assuaged so much human misery as John Howard; and John Howard rightly took his place at one corner of the dome of St. Paul's, the genuine Apostle of Him, among whose titles to our veneration and love, not the least befitting, not the least glorious, was that He went about doing good." [1]

and the authorities of St. Paul's Cathedral is in the British Museum (*Addit. MSS.*, 26055).

[1] Milman's *Annals of St. Paul's*, p. 480. It is remarkable that no fewer than three of Howard's friends among Nonconformist ministers, Dr. Stennet, Mr. Palmer, and Mr. Bull, should have taken as the text of their funeral sermons for him, the words to which Dean Milman here refers: "Who went about doing good." The text which Howard himself had desired to be taken, if any funeral sermon was preached, was Ps. xvii. 16—"As for me, I will behold Thy presence in righteousness: and when I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it." And from this Mr. Smith preached at Bedford.



STATUE IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

CHAPTER X

PERSONAL TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Howard's dislike to have his Portrait taken — Devices to escape "Snapshots" — Portraits of Howard—Personal Appearance — Mode of Life — Humour—Anecdotes — Love of Children — Relations with his Servants and his Tenants—Business-like Habits—Personal Religion—Courage—Modesty—Result of Howard's Labours—Conclusion.

IT is hoped that the narrative which has been given will enable the reader to form some conception of what manner of man Howard was, but it may be well, in conclusion, to append a chapter giving some account of his personal appearance, and adding a few facts and anecdotes illustrative of his disposition and character.

As to his personal appearance, there remain several descriptions of him, and not a few sketches to show us what he was like, although he had a singular dislike to having his portrait taken, and not only steadily refused to sit for it, but resorted to all kinds of whimsical expedients in

the endeavour to baffle those artists who tried to sketch his features by stealth. The "snapshots" which these gentlemen took were numerous. He was not safe from them even at his devotions in church; and, as he said himself, it cost him "a great deal of trouble and some money to make this insignificant form and ugly face escape a power of draughtsmen, painters, etc., that were lying in wait" for him. The kind of shifts to which he had recourse, he thus explained to his friend Mr. Pratt, the author of *The Triumph of Benevolence*, a poem in honour of Howard's work.

"I have detected a fellow at work upon this face of mine, ugly as it is, even as I have been walking in the streets of London; and, if a hackney-coach has been within call, I have popped into it, drawn up the blinds, and sat snug till I got to my own door, and then I have leaped out, and run into my own house, as if I was apprehensive a bailiff was at my heels. Nay, I have often had my door itself infested by a lurking artist, who was literally in wait to take me off. But one day, since my return, a trick I played one of these takers-off diverted me excessively. You must know I am a great gaper at the novelties that are continually presented at the print-shops in this great city; I was standing at that of Carrington Bowles, in St. Paul's Churchyard, the other day, to look at some

political caricatures very pleasantly executed, when, happening to cast my eye side-long, I discovered a fellow operating on my phiz[1] with all his might. Perceiving himself caught in the fact, he lowered his paper, and pretended to be, like myself and a number of others, looking only at the prints. I was just then in the humour to pay off this deception by another; so seeming, like him, to be wholly engrossed by a figure called Scotch Economy, well calculated to provoke the risible muscles, I threw mine into such contortions, and gave such sudden changes from one deformity to another, that had my painter etched any one of my features in its then position, the resemblance between my actual self and the copy would have been just as striking as—I could desire it to be. The painter, however, at length perceived the stratagem, and smiling, as if he gave me credit for it, put his pencil into his pocket and went away. I own I enjoyed the joke, and have since practised it more than once, with no less success." [2]

[1] William Cowper, the poet, had just the same dislike to have what he also calls his "phiz" taken. See his letter to John Newton, under the date July 7, 1781. "Whoever means to take my phiz will find himself sorely perplexed in seeking for a fit occasion. That I shall not give him one is certain; and if he steals one, he must be as cunning and quick-sighted a thief as Autolycus himself. His best course will be to draw a face, and call it mine, at a venture."

[2] Pratt's *Gleanings*, vol. i. p. 226.

In spite of these odd devices the artists were not wholly unsuccessful. A number of sketches and engravings remain to testify to their success. There are at least two paintings of him. One of these, attributed to Mather Brown, an American portrait-painter, is now in the National Portrait Gallery. The second is in Howard's own house at Cardington. Nothing is known of its history, The pose of the head is exactly the same as in the picture in the National Portrait Gallery, but the colouring of the dress is different. In Mather Brown's portrait the coat is pepper-and-salt and the waistcoat red, but in the Cardington picture both are black. If the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery is really by Mather Brown he must have painted Howard twice, for in 1789 there was published by E. Scott a large engraving (reproduced here as the frontispiece) "from an original portrait by Mather Brown in the possession of Mr. William Ellis." This is said by a friend of Howard, in the *Universal Magazine* for 1790, to be "really like him, much more so than any other I have seen." It is a three-quarters-length portrait, whereas that in the National Portrait Gallery represents only the head and bust; but otherwise the two are identical. It appears, then, that the last mentioned is a version on a smaller scale of the original picture from which Scott's engraving was taken; and it is probable that the

head in the Cardington portrait was also taken from it, or from an engraving of it.[1]

Besides these two paintings there exist a number of sketches and engravings of Howard, all of them in profile, as is natural, since the artists had to take him unawares. The following are those known to me :—

1. A Drawing from life, by T. Holloway ("T. Holloway, *ad vivum delin. et sculp.*") This has also been engraved by Freeman for Brown's *Life.* It is perhaps the best known of Howard's portraits, having been reproduced both in Field's *Life,* and also in his *Correspondence of John Howard.* The original drawing was apparently in the possession of Mrs. Prole, Howard's faithful servant, and the engraving was made specially for Brown's *Life,* as was also that of the second Mrs. Howard, from an original miniature, which Howard himself had given to Mrs. Prole.[2]

2. Very similar, but with the face turned to the left instead of the right, is the engraving

[1] In the *Universal Magazine* for April 1790, there is an engraving of the head and bust by T. Cook, corresponding very closely with the painting in the National Portrait Gallery, but it is said to be "taken from a large print, engraved by Mr. Edmund Scott, from an original painting in the possession of Mr. William Ellis." This "large print" is of course that which is here reproduced as the frontispiece.

[2] See Brown's *Life,* pp. xix. and 40.

given in Aikin's *View*. It was "sketched by an artist in London and engraved in London," and Aikin, who knew Howard well, speaks of it as "a most resembling likeness. It is somewhat of a caricature, but has very exactly the expression of his countenance when in a very serious attentive mood." [1]

3. A Pencil Sketch, now in the vestry of the Howard Chapel at Bedford, taken by stealth as he sat in church. This is admirably reproduced in Mr. Scullard's lecture, *John Howard*, and (not so well) in Ellis's *Men with a Mission: John Howard*. I have not been able to ascertain whether the sketch is that alluded to in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1790, which speaks of a print of "the benevolent Howard, done from an original sketch taken by stealth as he sat in church, published by W. Allen, Dame Street, Dublin." [2]

4. The *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1790 also gives a print of a pencilled likeness (with hat on), "taken from nature, March 1788," of which the writer of a letter signed *Hibernensis* says: "I pledge myself it was drawn from the life (unknown to Mr. Howard) while at my house by a young but ingenious artist." [3]

[1] Aikin's *View, etc.*, p. 209.
[2] *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1790, part 1. p. 369.
[3] *Ib.*

5. Medallion Portrait in the *European Magazine for* 1790. T. Prattent, sculp."

6. Full-length Figure, prefixed to *Anecdotes of the Life and Character of John Howard, Esq., F.R.S.*, written by a Gentleman, 1790." The portrait was "sketched with a pencil from life by a lady who resided some months under the same roof with Mr. Howard previous to his last expedition."

7. Full-length Figure, represented opening a prison door. This, like the last-mentioned portrait, is given in a small book published in London a few weeks after Howard's death.

8. Seated Figure, in three-cornered hat.[1]

Howard is described, by one who knew him, as "about the middle size, stout and well made, dark complexion, with dark quick eyes and aquiline nose;"[2] while a daughter of Dr. Aikin, writing many years later from her recollections, speaks of him as "a small man, brisk in his movements, with a lively eye, and expressive countenance."[3] His "red waistcoat" (which appears in Mather Brown's portrait), and "pepper-and-salt coat" lingered in the memory of another who had seen him in his childhood.[4] It was possibly

[1] Two plaster casts of Howard's face were taken after his death by order of Prince Potemkin, who retained one himself, and gave the other to Thomasson, from whom it was purchased by Mr. Whitbread. It has, however, long since disappeared, and nothing is known of it at present.

[2] Stoughton's *John Howard*, p. 288. [3] *Ib.* p. 307. [4] *Ib.* p. 289.

the briskness of his movements, which caused him on one occasion to be taken for a dancing-master!

The simplicity of his tastes and habits will have been abundantly apparent from what has been already said. No man had fewer wants than Howard. In diet he was abstemious to a degree. For many years before his death he was a total abstainer and a vegetarian. In his London house he says that there were "not a dozen joints of meat in seven years."[1] "Water and the plainest vegetables sufficed him. Milk, tea, butter, and fruit were his luxuries; and he was equally sparing in the quantity of food, and indifferent as to the stated times of taking it."[2] Real luxuries of all kinds he eschewed on principle, and in order that he might have more to spend on the work to which he had devoted his life. In his early years he evidently had a taste for art, and delighted in music as well as painting and sculpture. But after he had entered upon his career of benevolence he deliberately abstained from indulging it. It was not, as with Charles Darwin, that the taste was atrophied by disuse, but that he feared that it might interfere with the object to which he had consecrated his life. On one occasion Aikin tells us he was "prevailed

[1] Field's *Correspondence of John Howard*, p. 89.
[2] Aikin's *View, etc.*, p. 222.

upon in Italy, to go and hear some extraordinarily fine music; but, finding his thoughts too much occupied by it, he would never repeat the indulgence." [1]

His letters and several anecdotes that have been preserved show that he was by no means deficient in humour. He could appreciate a joke, even at his own expense, and was not above being guilty of a grim pleasantry, when he wished to rebuke others. Thus we are told that on his journeys, if the post-boy had not given complete satisfaction, on his arrival at his destination he would desire the landlord to send for some poor widow of good character, and to bring her and the post-boy together to his room. He then paid the latter his fare, giving him the exact sum due to him, and told him that "as he had not thought proper to attend to his repeated requests as to the manner of being driven, he should not make him any present; but, to show him that he did not withhold it out of a principle of parsimony, he would give the poor person present double the sum usually given to a postillion."

This queer device of his soon became known, and he said that he "had not long practised it before he experienced the good effects of it on all the roads where he was known." [2] Something of the same spirit was shown on his buttoning up

[1] Aikin's *View, etc.*, p. 212. [2] *Ib.* p. 218.

his pockets when the workmen at Warrington made use of bad language, remarking, as he did so, "I always do this whenever I hear men swear; as I think that anyone who can take God's name in vain can steal, or do anything that is bad." [1]

It would be a mistake to regard him as entirely lacking in the lighter graces. His letters to Lady Mary Whitbread form only one among several indications of the pleasure which he took in the friendship and society of ladies, and of the old-fashioned courtesy with which he treated them. He was, as we have seen, devotedly attached to his wife, and felt her loss deeply. Whether at any time he definitely contemplated marrying again is not certain. It has been stated that he actually made an offer to a sister of his friend, Dr. Aikin, who was afterwards well-known as Mrs. Barbauld; [2] and he himself told an amusing

[1] Stoughton's *John Howard*, p. 277.

[2] Brown's *Memories of Seventy Years*, quoted in Stoughton's *John Howard*, p. 274. Cf. the story in Brown's *Life*, p. 401. Brown's story, which he was told by a lady who had the circumstances related to her by Howard himself, was that "his first visit to a considerable town in the North of England, at a period of his life when he had not contemplated the extension of his tours of philanthropy beyond the limits of his native country, if indeed he had then entered upon them at all, was for the purpose of gaining an introduction to a lady who had already acquired a literary reputation by her maiden name, very deservedly increased since she bore another, with a view, should he find the fascination of her

story of the way in which on one occasion he was attracted by "a young lady of a most engaging manner and appearance, which very strongly reminded him of his Harriet. The lady and her companion, an elderly gentleman, were his fellow-passengers on a packet, and so much struck was he with her that, on arriving at the place of destination, he caused his servant to follow them, and get intelligence who they were. It was not without some disappointment that he learned that the old gentleman was an eminent merchant, and the young lady—*his wife.*"[1]

Of children he was passionately fond, and more than one of those of whom in their childhood he took notice have left on record their appreciation of his kindness, and the eagerness with which they looked forward to a visit from him. Whatever of severity there was in his treatment of his son

manners and the virtues of her heart equal to the brilliancy of her talents, to make her an offer of his hand. When he arrrived at the inn, he fell in company with a gentleman, of whom he made some inquiries respecting the lady and her family, when he had the mortification to learn that she was engaged to the person whom she soon afterwards married, though he was somewhat amused at finding that his informant was as much disappointed at this circumstance as himself, having come to —— precisely on the same errand." This clearly refers to Lucy Aikin, who published her first volume of poems in 1773, when living at Warrington, and was married to Dr. Barbauld in the following year.

[1] Aikin's *View, etc.*, p. 234.

was entirely a matter of principle, and due to no lack of affection.

Of his relations with his servants and dependents something ought to be said. Nothing could be pleasanter than they were, from the days when he tossed the loaf over the wall for his old gardener. His old nurse, who only died during his residence at Watcombe, was provided for and watched over by him with the greatest tenderness and care. His wife's maid afterwards married his bailiff, John Prole, and these two served him with the utmost devotion and fidelity all his life. After the husband's death there was found a paper which he had written, entitled, "A Father's Legacy to his Children," in which he describes the character of his "much esteemed and worthy master, Mr. Howard," and sets it forth as an example to his children, "especially in his diligence and activity in promoting the honour and glory of God, and the real good of his fellow-creatures." [1] Of Thomasson his personal servant, who was a mere lad when he entered his service, and who continued with him to the last, something has been already said. The fact that Howard took him with him on his last journey is incompatible with the idea that he gave any credence to the stories of the man having betrayed his confidence and misled his son.

[1] Extracts from this document, which was privately printed, are given in Brown's *Life*, p. 656.

Yet there seems to be no doubt that the stories were true, and that the man was utterly unworthy of the trust reposed in him. After Howard's death Mr. Whitbread took him into his service for a time, but was compelled to discharge him for serious misconduct.[1] We have already noticed the paternal regard which Howard bestowed upon his tenants during his residence at Cardington; but it might have been anticipated that, after he had become absorbed in his prison researches, he would scarcely have been able to devote so much thought and care to their welfare. Absentee landlords are almost sure to lose touch with their tenants. It would not have been unnatural if, as he was so constantly away from home, he had left all details to his bailiff, and contented himself with receiving his rents regularly. But nothing comes out more clearly in his correspondence than the astonishing way in which up to the last he insisted on looking into the minutest details himself; and was as mindful of the wants and well-being of his tenants when wandering to the farthest extremities of Europe as he was when continually residing at Cardington. Here is an extract from a letter to John Prole

[1] His subsequent history is given in Brown's *Life*, p. 653. After his dismissal by Mr. Whitbread, he took a public-house, but failed, and died a pauper in the Liverpool Infirmary.

written from the lazaretto at Venice, when his heart was heavy with anxiety about his son, and distracted by other matters, and when he had been absent from England for almost a year.

"Now as to our Cardington affairs, I hope everything goes smoothly on; Mr.——, etc., and cottagers do not get behind-hand in their rent; when Rubin leaves his farm, if you choose it, it shall not be raised; if otherwise, should it not be nearly the same as Smith's? I wish [you] to give a look on my garden, the hedge in Close Lane, and Clumps; I hope the sheep are prevented jumping over. Walker's Close and my closes I hope, are neat; the latter [were] very indifferent when I last returned; there were many nettles and weeds. Take in for a month John Nottingham or William Wiltshire to keep them down, by spading them quite up. After Christmas desire Mr. Lilburn to settle your accounts to the two Christmases; as it will be easier for me, separating the school bills, donations, taxes, etc., from other things. Samuel Preston I hope is well; if otherwise, anything I will do for the two widows. Mrs. Morgan I hope is well. Tell her if Nottingham's girl continues good, two guineas she will lay out for her in any manner she thinks proper. Some fine new currants will I hope come soon, as I was about six weeks ago at Zante, and are finer

this year than usual (as indeed I have not seen a shower of rain in Turkey for four or five months, but fine dews); they are for my tenants, widows and poor families at Cardington, about threepence each. You will pay to Mr. Symonds my subscription to Michaelmas.[1] At Christmas give Mrs. Thompson and Beccles each £1 1s. 0d.; Rayne, what I usually give him, 10s. 6d.—if not given last Christmas, then £1 1s. 0d.; Dolly Basset, £1 1s. 0d.; the blind man's widow, 10s.; five guineas to ten poor widows—that is, to each half a guinea, where you think it will be most acceptable; one of which widows [is to be] Mrs. Tingey, in memory of Joshua Tingey, who I promised to excuse one year's rent; five guineas also to ten families that you think proper objects, one of which [should be] Richard Ward. I think you said Abraham Stevens left a girl and boy, one of which is dead; privately inquire the character, disposition, circumstances of the other. You will accept of coat, waistcoat, and breeches. I hope the walks before my house, Joshua Crockford's, the new one near the bridge and by Broadfield's and Walker's, are neat. Tell Joseph Walker to remind Mr. Whitbread relative to his brother's pay, etc. Is my chaise horse gone blind, or spoiled? Duke is well, must have his range when past his labour; not doing such a cruel

[1] See above, p. 28.

thing as I did with the old mare; I have a thousand times repented of it."

Such a letter gives a remarkable insight into the methodical and business-like habits of the man, his capacity for detail, the clearness of his recollection, and his thoughtful and systematic charities. It is clear from his whole career that in almsgiving and charity he acted upon the rule which he laid down in one of his private memoranda: "Our superfluities should be given up for the convenience of others. Our convenience should give place to the necessities of others. And even our necessities give way to the extremities of the poor." [1]

Of his simple faith and piety, and (founded upon them) his perseverance and dauntless courage, his devotion to duty, and determination to do the thing that is right, there is no need to say much. They are manifest in every step of his career. It would have been easy to illustrate them by large extracts from his private meditations, and the "covenant" which he drew up in 1770, and renewed on subsequent occasions; but it has been thought better to omit these here. They were never intended to be read by others, and cannot be fairly judged but by those who are in the fullest sympathy with the writer of them. His courage was a part of his religion. He was

[1] Stoughton's *John Howard*, p. 342.

absolutely without fear, whether of infection or of injuries from men. To the question as to the precautions which he took to avoid the former, his answer was that "next to the *free goodness and mercy* of the *Author* of my being, temperance and cleanliness are my chief preservatives. Trusting in *Divine Providence,* and believing myself in the way of my *duty,* I visit the most infectious hospitals and noxious cells; and while thus employed, *I fear no evil.*—However, I seldom enter an hospital or prison before breakfast; in an offensive room I avoid drawing my breath deeply; and on my return sometimes wash my mouth and hands."[1] As to the latter it has been well said that he "carried in his small and homely stature, a certain grave and potent personality, made up of unaffected earnestness, simplicity of purpose, and religious courage, which awed and commanded from the first, alike prisoners and prison keepers."[2] This is strikingly illustrated by the well-known story of the way in which he quelled a riot in the Savoy: "Two hundred of the prisoners had broken loose and killed two of their keepers, nor dare anyone approach, till Howard, in spite of the remonstrances of his friends, calmly entered in among them, and

[1] *Lazarettos*, p. 232.

[2] H. W. Bellows on *John Howard*, quoted in Stoughton, p. 339.

"such was the effect of his mild and benign manner, that they soon listened to his remonstrances, represented their grievances, and at last allowed themselves to be quietly reconducted to their cells."[1] It is apparent also in the ascendancy he gained wherever he went, and the way in which prison gates were flung open at his word, and the secrets of the dungeons revealed at his bidding. It was universally felt that he was "an exception to all rules,"[2] and his commands were obeyed without question. Two striking facts he has himself recorded, which are worth noticing here. First, in all his journeys he was never once stopped by robbers or highwaymen, nor ever knew himself to be in any great danger from such;[3] and, secondly, in all his visits to gaols and prisons, in this and other kingdoms, he never received any insults either from keepers or prisoners; nor ever lost anything in any of them, except that once he lost "a large new handkerchief" out of his pocket. This he did not miss for some time after, but on a subsequent visit, ten months later, it was presented to him by a prisoner, with the remark that he believed that he had dropped it when he was last there![4]

Of his own powers and exploits he had a singularly modest opinion. Nothing was more

[1] Brown's *Life*, p. 393.
[2] *Ib.* p. 331.
[3] *The State of Prisons*, p. 464.
[4] *Lazarettos*, p. 215.

distasteful to him than any public reference to his good works and labours for the benefit of others. If they were alluded to in his presence, he never lost an opportunity of speaking slightingly of them. They were his "hobby," his "whim." He was only "mad Jack Howard," as he delighted to call himself,[1] or "the plodder who goes about to collect materials for men of genius to make use of."[2] This last estimate is a really discriminating one. For, great as our admiration for Howard must be, it cannot be denied that he was deficient in what is commonly called "genius." His great merit lay in the resolute persistence with which he hunted out the real facts, and exposed them to the public. But when we come to ask what he actually achieved by his seventeen years of self-denying labour, there can hardly fail to be some feeling of disappointment that the result is not greater. There were, of course, numberless cases of individual distress which were relieved by him: scores of prisoners confined for some paltry debt, or languishing in gaol because of their inability to pay their fees for the privilege of being taken into custody on some charge of which the law had declared them innocent, were released by his charity. But the *system* remained much the same after his exertions as it was before. Some

[1] Brown's *Life*, p. 304. [2] Aikin's *View, etc.*, p. 227.

changes for the better were certainly made, but they were few in number. So long as he was going his rounds, his personal influence secured greater care and humanity on the part of gaolers and turnkeys, and stirred up magistrates to some sort of realisation of their responsibilities; but, when this stimulus was removed, things soon drifted back to their old state of neglect and cruelty. When Mrs. Fry began her work in Newgate in 1815 things seem to have been just as bad as when Howard first visited it in 1775. The real reform of our prisons belongs to a later date. Howard was essentially a pioneer. It was an untried path that he trod. His work needed supplementing, before it could have the full results he desired. His own words, spoken to a friend just before he started on his last journey, were prophetic of what actually happened. "When I am dead, someone else will take up the matter and carry it through." It is to Mrs. Fry, and her brother-in-law, Sir T. Fowell Buxton, and those who laboured with them in the "Society for the Reformation of Prison Discipline," that we must give the credit of actually bringing about the changes which have made prison discipline a reality, and have removed the almost incredible scandals of which only a century ago scarcely anyone took any account. Yet Howard's was a noble life, and was not lived in

vain. He laid down the lines on which reform must proceed; the need of almost every improvement that has been made was first indicated in his books; and his life has been the inspiration of every prison reformer since his day. It is a splendid example of a life consecrated to a single object, and lived in the belief that it was the call of God which summoned him to it. Whittier's fine lines on Charles Sumner, the American statesman, are singularly applicable to him, and with them this brief sketch of his life may be fitly concluded.

"No trumpet sounded in his ear,
He saw not Sinai's cloud and flame,
But never yet to Hebrew seer
A clearer voice of duty came.

God said: Break thou these yokes, undo
These heavy burdens. I ordain
A work to last thy whole life through,
A ministry of strife and pain.

Forego thy dreams of lettered ease,
Put thou the scholar's promise by,
The rights of man are more than these.
He heard, and answered, 'Here am I.'

He set his face against the blast,
His feet against the flinty shard,
Till the hard service grew, at last,
Its own exceeding great reward."

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